



The most Reverend
D^r JOHN TILLOTSON
late Arch-Bishop of Canterbury.



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Several
D I S C O U R S E S
O F

The Life, Sufferings, Resurrection,
and Ascension of Christ;

AND THE
Operations of the Holy Ghost.

viz.

The Life of Jesus Christ consider'd, as our Example.	Of the Gift of Tongues conferr'd on the Apostles.
The Sufferings of Christ consider'd, as a proper Means of our Salvation.	Of the coming of the Holy Ghost, as an Advocate for Christ.
The Evidence of our Saviour's Resurrection.	Of the coming of the Holy Ghost, as a Guide to the Apostles.
The Possibility of the Resurrection asserted and prov'd.	Of the ordinary Influence of the Holy Ghost, on the Minds of Christians.
The Resurrection of our Saviour consider'd, as an Argument for seeking things above.	The Fruits of the Spirit, the same with Moral Virtues.
The Circumstances and Benefits of our Saviour's Ascension.	The Necessity of Supernatural Grace, in order to a Christian Life.

By the Most Reverend
Dr. JOHN TILLOTSON,
Late Lord Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*.

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where they were sitting. And
there appeared unto them cloven
tongues like as of fire, and it sat
upon each of them. And they
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I P E T. II. 21.

*Leaving us an Example, that ye
should follow his steps.*

THE Apostle here propounds to
Christians the Example of our
Saviour, as an Argument to
perswade them to one particular
Grace and Virtue, namely, Patience
under Sufferings unjustly laid upon
us, v. 19, 20, 21. *For this is thank-
worthy, if a man for conscience sake*
B toward

 toward God endure grief, suffering
 Vol. 10. wrongfully. For what glory is it, if
 when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye
 shall take it patiently? but if when ye
 do well, and suffer for it, ye take it pa-
 tiently, that is acceptable with God. For
 even hereunto were ye called: because
 Christ also suffered for us, leaving us
 an example, that ye should follow his
 steps.

But tho' the Example of our Saviour
 be here propounded to us upon a
 particular occasion, and with a more
 especial regard to the particular Vir-
 tue of Patience under unjust Suffer-
 ings, which did so eminently appear
 in our Blessed Saviour, the most mee-
 ke and patient Endurer that ever was
 of the greatest and most wrongfull
 Sufferings; yet the Apostle does not
 limit this great Pattern of all Righte-
 ousness, to the single Virtue of Pa-
 tience, but propounds it to us, as an
 Example of universal holiness and
 goodness; for so he extends it in the
 next words, *Leaving us an Example
 that ye should follow his steps, who
 was without sin, neither was guile found in
 his mouth.*

consider'd, as our Example.

3

In this latitude and extent I shall **Serm. I.**
discourse of it at this time, and that
under these following heads.

I. That his Life is a most abso-
lute and perfect Pattern.

II. That it is a very easie and fami-
liar Example.

III. Very encouraging to the Imita-
tion of it.

IV. An universal Pattern fitted for
the Imitation of all sorts of Persons,
of what Rank or Condition soever.

V. In the Nature of it very power-
ful to engage and oblige men to the
imitation of it.

I. The life of our Blessed Saviour
is a most absolute and perfect Pattern
of holiness and goodness, compleat
and entire in all its parts, and perfect
to the utmost degree, in the follow-
ing whereof there is no danger of be-
ing misguided, no fear of miscarri-
age: whereas all other Examples of
mortal

mortal men are fallible and uncertain guides, which if we follow too closely, will sometime or other mislead us. In the lives of the best men recorded in Scripture, we may discern some spot and blemish, some error and oversight, some fall or slip; so that the lives of the holiest men are no sure Rule, no perfect Measure of our Duty, and are therefore to be imitated with great wisdom and wariness, lest if we follow all their actions indifferently and implicitly, in confidence they are good, because they are theirs, we may fall into great errors and failings; and therefore in following the Lives and Examples of the best men, we must have an eye to the Rule, and by *that* judge of the Example which we propose to imitate; otherwise we may easily be seduced by the authority of a great Example.

But the Example of our Lord is *a living law and rule*, his Precepts and his Pattern are of equal perfection, and the Imitation of his Life and Actions is the very same thing with Obedience to his Laws. For the Life of our blessed Saviour

a perfect Example.

5

Serm. I.

Saviour here on Earth, is the Life of God in the nature and likeness of Man ; he was God as well as Man, and the divine Nature is certainly the Pattern of all Perfection. As he was the Son of God, he was *the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image and Character of his person* : and as he was the Son of Man, though he had natural frailties and infirmities, and was subject to hunger and thirst, weariness and pain, like other men ; yet he had all the moral Perfections belonging to Human Nature, without any of the evil inclinations, and sinful frailties to which it is incident ; and his humane Nature was assisted in an extraordinary manner by the Spirit of God, which *was not communicated to him by measure, but he was anointed with that holy unction above his fellows, above all the Sons of men, above all the Prophets and Messengers of God that ever were sent to mankind ; He had no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.* And indeed it was requisite that he that *was manifested to take away our sins,* and to make expiation for them, should himself be *without sin* sin, as

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the Apostle to the Hebrews reasons, Heb. 7. 26. *Such an high Priest became us, who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners: And had he not been so, he could neither have been an Example, nor an Expiation.*

And this is no small advantage to mankind, to have so excellent a Pattern of the same Nature with our selves to imitate, so perfect a Copy to write after. For whoever would excel in any kind, must (as Quintilian says) *optima quæque exempla ad imitandum proponere*, propose to himself the highest and most perfect examples of that kind for his imitation; and the Example of our blessed Saviour is unquestionably such, a perfect Pattern of all goodness and virtue, to the Perfection whereof, tho' we can never attain, yet it is a great advantage to have it always before us, and in our eye, that we may correct the errors and deformities of our lives, by the unspotted purity, and perfect innocency of his Life, and that we may be always aspiring after farther degrees of goodness; for surely we can

an no way better learn how God
ould have men to live in this *Serm. 1.*
World, than by seeing how God
himself lived, when he was pleased
to become Man, to assume our Na-
ture, and dwell among us.

II. As the Life of our blessed Sa-
viour is a most perfect, so likewise
is a familiar and easie Example.
The Divine Nature is the great Pat-
tern of Perfection; but that is too re-
mote from us, and above our sight;
No man hath seen God at any time, nor
can see him; and tho' his Perfections
are represented to our Minds in some
degree, yet they are so glorious and
glazling an Object, that we cannot bear
to behold them with that steadfastness
with which we ought to eye our Pat-
tern; and therefore God hath been
pleased to condescend so far to our
weakness, as to give us a visible
Example of those Virtues he requires
of us in *his own Son, appearing in the*
likeness of sinful flesh; and the Son of
God is an Example of equal Perfecti-
on with God himself, but much
more easie and familiar and level to
us, in which we may see the several

Vol. 10. Virtues of a good life practised in such instances, and upon such occasions, as do frequently happen in humane life.

Nothing was ever more simple and open, more obvious and easie to common imitation, than the Life of our blessed Saviour, in which there was nothing dark and mysterious, abstruse and intricate, it was all perfect innocency and goodness, and he carried on one plain and intelligible and uniform design, which was to do all the good he possibly could to all men; this he pursued with all his might, with the greatest vigor and industry, with an undaunted courage and resolution, with an unwearied diligence, with a constant chearfulness and serenity of mind; this was *his meat and drink*, his great business and delight, his life and his happiness; he was not superciliously morose, had no affected singularities, no peculiar austerities in habit or diet, different from the common usage of men; his Conversation was kind and innocent, free and familiar, open and indifferent to all sorts of Persons;
for

for he was a Physician, and every body had need of him, all mankind were his Patients. He did not place Religion (as some have done since) in retirement from the World, and shunning the Conversation of men, and taking great care to do no body good, not in profound Mysteries and fine Speculations: but in the plain and honest practice of the solid and substantial Virtues of a good Life; in meekness and humility, in kindness and charity, in contentedness in a low and mean condition, and a calm composure of Mind under all accidents and events, in patience under the greatest reproaches and sufferings, and a perfect submission to the Will of God in all his dispensations, how harsh and unpleasant soever.

Now there is nothing in all this, but what lies open to every Man's understanding, and is easie to our practice and imitation, requiring nothing but an honest mind, and due care and diligence to do what we may easily know, to follow our guide in a plain way, and in all the Actions

ons of our Lives, to tread in those
 Vol. 10. steps in which the Son of God, and
 the best Man that ever was hath
 gone before us.

III. The Life of our Blessed Saviour is likewise an encouraging Example. It cannot but give great Life to all good Resolutions and Endeavours, to see all that which God requires of us performed by one in our Nature, by a Man like our selves. Our Saviour indeed had many advantages above us, being God as well as Man, and his humanity being supported by the divine Nature to which it was united, being clear from all the ill effects of original Sin, and from all kind of vicious and inordinate Inclinations : but then it is a great Encouragement to us, to consider that God doth not require at our hands a perfect and unfinning Obedience, as the Condition of our Salvation and Happiness ; but only such an Obedience to his Laws, as is sincere and continually aspiring after greater Perfection, which is very possible to us by the grace of Christ, even in this imperfect State ; that
 God

God considers our weakness, and how much we stand in need of his Grace *Serm. 1.* and Assistance, and hath assured us that it shall not be wanting to us, if we heartily and earnestly beg it of him; and that strength which we may have for asking, is as good as if it were our own. If Christ were the Son of God; so are we in a lower degree, by Grace and Adoption; and if we be the Sons of God, the Spirit of God dwells in us, to quicken and raise us to newness of Life. And he that hath left us such an Example, on purpose that we might follow it, will not surely leave us destitute of Power to enable us to do so. It is a good Argument to us, that he will enable us to do that in some degree in our own Persons, which he himself did for our Example in our Nature.

An Example more suitable to our weakness might seem to have had more of Encouragement in it: but we are to consider that the Son of God assumed our Nature, as compass with infirmities, and liable to be tempted in all things as we are, only without sin; so that his Example could
not

Vol. 10.  not possibly have come nearer to us than it does, without great disadvantage to us, without wanting that Perfection which is necessary to a compleat and absolute Pattern. In short, the Spirit of Christ dwells in us, and the same Spirit which kept and preserved him from all Sin, is equally able to mortifie Sin in us, and to enable us to do the Will of God in such manner as he will accept to our justification.

IV. It is an universal Pattern. As the Doctrine of our Saviour, so his Example was of an universal Nature and Design, calculated for all times and places, and as much as was possible, abstracted from the circumstances of a particular Condition, that it might be the more equally suited to all Callings, and Conditions, and Capacities of Men, and fitted for general direction and imitation in all sorts of Goodness and Virtue, either in the general Principle, or in the particular Instances of them. And for this reason he would not engage himself in any particular Calling, or way of Life, that his Pattern might
more

more equally and indifferently regard
all mankind.

Serm. I.

He was really a great Person, the greatest that ever was in Birth and Dignity, being the only Son of God, the Maker and the Heir of all things: and yet he submitted to the lowest Condition, to all the degrees of Poverty and Meanness, of Contempt and Sufferings, to teach men of high degree to be humble and serviceable to the good of others; and men of low degree to be contented and chearful in the meanest Condition, and the hardest Circumstances that the Providence of God shall see good to place them in.

He had the deepest and most comprehensive knowledge; *in him*, as the Apostle expresseth it, *were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*: and yet he made no vain shew and ostentation of it, he did not puzzle his hearers with abstruse Speculations and sublime Mysteries, but in a way of plain and familiar instruction declared to his hearers those things which were most useful and necessary

ry, for them to know. He confuted
Vol. 20. the Doctors, and confounded the
 wisdom of the Wise, those who were
 conceited of their own knowledge
 and skill in divine things; but was
 always ready to condescend to the
 weakness and ignorance of the mean-
 est capacity; giving herein an Exam-
 ple to the wise and learned, not to
 make a show of their knowledge, but
 to make the best use of it; not to lift
 up themselves above others, but to
 condescend and stoop to them for
 their good.

He sometimes retired from Conver-
 sation and Company, that he might
 be alone and at leisure to attend up-
 on God, and meditate on Divine and
 Heavenly things, without interrup-
 tion and distraction; but most fre-
 quently he conversed with others, and
 mingled himself with all sorts of Per-
 sons, that he might give all the ad-
 vantage, and do all the good he could
 to all men. Nay he did not decline
 the Conversation of the worst of
 men, and it was really true, which
 was objected to him, that *he was a*
friend of publicans and sinners. being
 sincerely

sincerely desirous to do them the greatest Kindness in the World, to reform Serm. 1.

their manners, and reclaim them to a better Course; so that he was a Pattern both of the Contemplative and Active Life, and shews us how to mix these to the greatest Advantage; and by his own Example teacheth us, that we cannot serve God better than by doing good to men; and that he is as well pleased, when we lay out our selves for the benefit of others Spiritual and Temporal, as if we employed all our Thoughts and Meditations wholly upon himself and Divine things; that a perpetual retirement from the World, and turning the Conversation of men is not the most Religious Life, but living among men and doing good to them.

More particularly, the Life of our Blessed Saviour is a Pattern to us.

1. Of the greatest and most substantial Virtues.

2. Of the most rare and unusual.

3. Of

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3. Of the most useful and beneficial.

4. Of the most hard and difficult. And,

5. Of such Virtues as are most needful, and for the Practice of which there is the greatest and most frequent occasion in humane life.

1. It is a Pattern of the greatest and most substantial Virtues.

Of a fervent Piety and Devotion toward God. We read that he often retired to pray, and sometimes spent whole nights in it. His mind was continually upon God, as appears by his frequent Ejaculations upon all occasions, by his Communication and Discourse, which was always either instructive of men in Divine Truths, or perswasive to a Holy Practice; from worldly Objects and Occurrences, he would take occasion to raise some spiritual Meditation, and to speak of heavenly things.

And

And then his ready and chearful obedience to the Will of God in all things. *In the Volume of the Book it is written of me, I came to do thy Will O my God.* He speaks of it with pleasure, and *be delighted to do it*, he declined the Will of God in no instance, how difficult and displeasing soever to Flesh and Blood.

The perfect Purity and Innocency of his Life. *He was a Lamb without spot and blemish,* 1 Pet. 1. 19. *He did no sin,* Chap. 2. 21. *Leaving us herein an Example,* that tho' we cannot keep equal pace with him, yet *we should follow his steps.* *He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,* Heb. 7. 27.

And then his universal Charity, taking all opportunities to do all the good temporal and spiritual, that he could to all men, of which his whole Life is one great and continued instance. These are all great and substantial Virtues.

I have indeed said nothing of Justice,

Vol. 10. Justice, both because there was little occasion for it, he having nothing to do in those matters wherein Justice is concerned. He had no Estate of his own, and he meddled not with those of other mens: and likewise because his Life was all Goodness, which is a virtue of a higher pitch than Justice; he that was so good to all, we need not doubt of his Justice, if there had been occasion for it.

2. He was a Pattern of the most rare and unusual Virtues.

Such was his sincerity; *Guile was not found in his mouth*, 1 Pet. 2. 22. His Conversation was free and open, without disguise and concealment; and therefore when the High Priest asked him of his Disciples, and of his Doctrine, *John 18. 19.* He wonder'd at the question; *Why askest thou me? ask them them that heard me. I spake openly to the world, I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whether the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing.* And this is no common Virtue, and therefore

our

our Saviour gave it as a singular Commendation to Nathanael, John *Serm. 1.*

i. 47. *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.* Perfect sincerity is a great Foundation of goodness, it is soundness at the heart, and like perfect health, seldom to be seen; there is hardly any thing wherein men, otherwise good and virtuous, do oftner trip and falter.

Another Virtue which is not very usual was eminent in our Saviour, I mean true Humility, without Affectation and secret Pride lurking under it. This appeared very remarkable, and very natural in his whole Life, which was all of it the greatest instance of Humility that ever was, and therefore with great assurance he propounds himself to our imitation in this, *Matth. 11. 29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in spirit.* And St. Paul sets this Virtue before us, as being the constant temper of our Lord, and visible in his whole Undertaking, and in every part of it from first to last, from his coming into the world to his going out of it, *Phil. 2. 5, 6, 7,*


 Vol. 10. *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation (he emptied himself of all his Majesty and Glory) and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Here was Humility indeed, from so great a height to stoop so low, from the top of Glory and Majesty, to the lowest pitch of meanness and misery. Here's a Pattern for us; and how should it shame and confound the pride of the Sons of men, to see the Son of God so humble? There is no Virtue I am sure which we have so much reason, and yet none which we have so little inclination to imitate. Pride was not made for men, says the Son of Syrach, it does not become us, and yet it is the fashion; we know that we have no cause to be proud, and yet we know not how to be humble. Let the Example of our Lord's humility bring down the haughtiness of men, and*
 when

when we consider how he abased himself, let us be vile in our own Eyes, *Serm. I.*
and abhor our selves in dust and
ashes.

And then his Contempt of the World, and the Enjoyments and pleasures of it, to that degree, that he would have no part and share in the possessions of it, not so much as one of the first, and almost lowest conveniences of life, a settled abode and habitation; so that as he himself tells us, he was in a more destitute condition than the brute Creatures. *The Foxes have holes, and the Birds of the Air have nests: but the son of man hath not where to lay his head.* Not that he designed to oblige us to a strict imitation of him in this particular; for he might, and we may lawfully possess and enjoy these things: but to teach us not to over-prize them, not to seek them too earnestly, nor love them inordinately. That he despised them, should keep us from admiring them, and doating upon them; that he would not have them in his possession, should keep them out of our hearts, and make us very loose and

indifferent in our affections to them; that he valued doing good above all the Enjoyments of this World, should make us value them only in order to that end.

And then his excessive kindness and benignity to us, such as men very rarely shew to their best Friends, and the best Men; but such as no Man ever shewed to his Enemies. *Peradventure for a good Man one would even dare to die,* says St. Paul, Rom. 5. 7. *but herein God commended his love to us, in that whilst we were sinners, Christ died for us.* And this Pattern of love our Saviour propounds to our imitation, John 15. 12, 13. *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friend.* The highest pitch of human Friendship that ever was, was to die for a friend: but our Lord died not for his friends, but for his enemies, that he might make them his friends, by gaining them to the Obedience of his Laws. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* The same Pattern the Apostles of

of our Lord propound to us, *Eph. 5. 2.* *Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved* Sermon. I.

us, and given himself for us. 1 John 3. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* Here is a Pattern of the highest and most unusual kind of love proposed to our imitation; not that every Man, by virtue of this Example, is to lay down his life for another, because that is not practicable; for then by the same reason that I am obliged to lay down my life for another, he would be as much obliged to lay down his life for me; and so by my dying for him, I should hinder him of doing a duty to which he was equally obliged, and take it out of his hands: but the meaning of this Precept is, that as Christ died for a common good, so we ought to bear that common affection to Mankind, and especially to our Brethren, who are endeared to us by a nearer Relation, as in imitation of the Example he hath given us, to be ready by our single life, if there be occasion, to redeem the lives of many of our Brethren, and to expose our selves to

save them. This I conceive is all that Vol. 10. can reasonably be collected from our obligation to imitate our Lord's Example.

3. The Life of our Blessed Saviour is likewise a Pattern of such Virtues, as are most useful and beneficial to others.

In his readiness to do good to all Persons in all Kinds; by instructing their ignorance, and supplying their wants, Spiritual and Temporal; by resolving their doubts, and comforting them in their sorrows; by healing their Diseases and Infirmities, which he indeed did in extraordinary and miraculous ways, because he was destitute of ordinary means; and we are to do it by ordinary means, and such as are in our Power, which when they are, there is no need of miracles. And then in his seeking occasions and opportunities for it, not content with those that offer'd themselves, but enquiring after them; and in his unwearied diligence in this work; for *he went about doing good*, spent whole days from morning to night,

night, for the service and benefit of others; neglected himself and the ordinary refreshments of Nature, out of his great zeal to work the work of him that sent him, to bring glory to God, and good to Men. Serm. I.

And in the delight he took in this employment, it was *his meat and drink* to be doing of it; he esteemed it his Happiness, yea a greater felicity to confer Benefits upon others, than any Man finds in receiving the greatest Benefit from others; for that it seems was a noted saying of his, a kind of Motto with him, as St. Paul testifies, *Acts 20. 35. It is more blessed to give than to receive.* And in all this, he persisted in despite of the greatest discouragements from the ingratitude and malice of men, who maligned him for his kindness, and put an ill construction upon his most Charitable Actions, and were ready to stone him for his good works: but this did not discourage him and take him off; so he might do good, he was contented to hear and suffer ill.

And then in his Condescension to others,

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others, and Consideration of their weakness, and complying with them in lawful and indifferent things, for their Edification, and to gain them in greater matters. This St. Paul tells us was our Lord's temper, and he urgeth Christians with the Example of it, *Rom. 15. 1, 2, 3. We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself.* Where we have liberty and can yield, we ought to abate of our own humour, for the good and Edification of others, and not peevishly and stiffly to insist upon lesser things, to the hinderance of a greater good; *for even Christ pleased not himself.* He who had all Authority to Command, and right to be obeyed, and who could not err in any thing, yet he condescended to the weakness and infirmities of others, and in all indifferent things, did not consult his own inclination, but their interest and Edification,

And which greatly conduceth to the
Comfort and Benefit of all Societies,
both

both Civil and Ecclesiastical, he gave us the Example of an obedient and peaceable temper, conforming himself and his actions not only to Divine, but Human Laws, *Giving to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's*; insomuch that when Tribute was demanded of him, tho' he was really free from any such obligation, and so poor that he was not able to pay it, in which case even *Cæsar* must lose his right, nevertheless to avoid offence, he submitted to it, and chose rather to work a miracle, than to appear refractory and disobedient. Serm. I.

And in Religious Rites and Ceremonies, and the Observance of days and times, he did not only conform to all Divine Institutions, but to Human Appointment and Usage in all things that were of an innocent and indifferent nature; and this without any anxious scrupulosity, and perverse disputing every inch of his liberty; with great peaceableness observing those Religious Festivals, which had no other appointment but of the Civil Authority, and were of meer human institution;

Vol. 10. institution; and with great prudence steering a middle course between endless superstition, and scrupulous and petulant Faction; giving all Christians herein a pattern, how to demean themselves in like cases, with great Peaceableness and Obedience, and not to do or avoid the doing of any thing, out of peevishness and singularity of humour, and a spirit of contradiction, and not to indulge needless and endless scruples, especially on the wrong side, as it is too visible many men's scruples lie almost wholly about Obedience to Authority, and compliance with indifferent Customs, but very seldom about the danger of Disobedience and Unpeaceableness, and rendering in pieces the Church of Christ by needless Separations and endless Divisions.

And our Lord did not only give us the Example of a peaceable and uniting Spirit, but a little before his departure out of the World, he bequeaths it to his Disciples, as his last Legacy, *John 14. 27. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.* And to confirm it to them, he makes it his most earnest

earnest and particular Prayer to God for them, that God would preserve this Spirit of Peace and Unity among Christians to the end of the World, foreseeing in his infinite Wisdom, what mischiefs and dishonour the contrary temper would bring to his Holy Religion, *John 17. 20, 21, 22, 23.* Neither pray I for these alone, meaning his Disciples, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that is, for all Christians to the end of the World, That they all may be one, as thou father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me. Intimating that nothing is more apt to bring in question the Divinity of the Christian Doctrine, than Contentions and Divisions among Christians, That the world may know that thou hast sent me.

Let us often think of this Pattern,
and

~~~~~  
Vol. 10. and this Prayer of our Saviour, and  
let the consideration of it quell those  
Unchristian Heats which are among  
us, lest by our Animosities and Divi-  
sions about lesser things, which what  
ever opinion men may have of them,  
do no ways touch upon the Life and  
Essence of Religion, we first disho-  
nour, and finally destroy from among  
us the best Religion in the World.  
*And God grant that we may all know and  
do in this our day, the things which be-  
long to our Peace, before they be hid from  
our eyes, for his mercies sake in Jesus  
Christ; to whom with the Father, and the  
holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory now  
and ever.*

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# SERMON II.

The Life of Jesus Christ consider'd,  
as our Example.

The Second Sermon on this Text.

1 P E T. II. 21.

*Leaving us an Example, that ye  
should follow his steps.*

**I** Have considered our Saviour's Example as an Universal Pattern, calculated for all Persons, Times and Places ; and this I illustrated in these particulars.

1. That it was a Pattern to us of the greatest and most substantial Virtues.

2. Of

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2. Of such as are most Rare and Unusual.

3. Of such as are most Useful and Beneficial to others. I proceed to the particulars which remain to be spoken to.

4. Our Saviour is likewise a Pattern to us of such Virtues as are most hard and difficult to be practised, such as are most against the grain of our corrupt Nature, and most contrary to Flesh and Blood,

Every Virtue is then hard and difficult, when it either contradicts the strong Inclinations of Nature, or meets with powerful Temptations to the contrary.

The Virtues which thwart the Inclinations of Humane Nature, are comprehended under the general name of self-denial, the denial of our selves in those things which are commonly dearest to men ; such are our own Life, our Pleasure, our Ease, our Reputation ; in all these our blessed Lord



Lord hath given us the greatest Example of self-denial that ever was; Serm. 2.

he denied his own Life, and gave up himself wholly to the Will of God, to do and suffer whatever he thought fit to impose upon him. So he himself tells us, *John 5. 30. I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which sent me; and John 6. 30. I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.* And when he was in that great Agony, upon the apprehension of his approaching Sufferings, at which Nature did start, and when that bitter Cup, that Cup of astonishment, was put into his hand, tho' he would have been glad to have declined it, if God had thought fit; yet upon the whole matter he submitted to it, and renounced his own Will, the strongest Inclination of Nature that could be, in obedience to the Will of God, *Mat. 26. 39. He fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt; and ver. 42. He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, O my*  
D Father,

*Father, if this Cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.* Here was a great Conflict; Nature declined those dreadful Sufferings, which were coming upon him, and would have shrunk back: but he considered his Duty, and made his Inclination to yield to it.

And he did not only deny his own Will in obedience to the Will of God, for which there is so great and invincible Reason; but he denied it likewise in Compliance and Condescension to the prejudices, and humours, and infirmities of men, for their *Edification and Good*. So St. Paul tells us, and propounds our Lord herein to us for a Pattern, *Rom. 15. 2, 3.*

He denied himself in the lawful Pleasures and Satisfactions, in the Ease and Accommodations of Life; he lived meanly and fared hardly, he possessed and enjoyed none of the good things of this World, and endured all the Evils of it; he despised Riches, and the pomp and Pride of Life, and contented himself with a poor and

and destitute Condition, *Having not where to lay his head*, nor wherewithal to support Nature, and to defray the common Tribute without a Miracle. And he did not submit to this poor and mean Condition upon necessity; for *He was Lord of all*; he made the World, and it was all his own, upon the highest Right and Title: but he voluntarily embraced it, *Being rich, for our sake he became poor*, that he might wean us from the love of these things, and be an effectual Example to us of the contempt of worldly Wealth and Greatness.

Serm. 2.

And he denied himself likewise in one of the dearest and tenderest things in the World, to the wisest and greatest Minds, I mean in point of Reputation. *He made himself of no reputation*, says St. Paul, Phil. 2. 7. *He emptied himself*. To submit to contempt, is to empty ones self indeed; Reputation being one of the last things a generous Mind would be content to forgo, and that which some have held in equal dearness and esteem with life it self:

D 2

yet

yet in this our Lord denyed himself, and that he might do good to Mankind, was contented to be esteemed one of the worst of men, and without any kind of cause and desert to undergo all manner of obloquy and reproach, to be accounted a Magician, an Impostor, a *Friend and Companion of Publicans and Sinners*, a Seducer of the People, a Seditious Person, and more worthy of the most cruel and shameful Death than the greatest Malefactor. Thus was the Son of God contented to be set below the worst of men, to be abased and vilified, that he might be a perfect Pattern to us of this difficult Virtue of self-denial, even in those things which are held in greatest esteem among the best of men.

And surely in no Case is Example more necessary than in this, to animate and encourage us in the discharge of so difficult a Duty, so contrary to the bent and inclination of our Nature. A bare Precept of self-denial in these things, and a peremptory Command to Sacrifice our own Wills, our Ease, our Pleasure



and Reputation, yea and Life it self  
to the glory of God, and the good Serm. 2.  
of men, would have sounded very  
harsh and severe, had not the pra-  
ctice of all this been exemplified  
in a Pattern of so much Advan-  
tage; one who in all these respects  
denied himself much more than is  
possible for us to do, who might  
have insisted upon a greater Right,  
who abased himself and stooped from  
a greater height and dignity, who  
did not submit to a Condition of  
Poverty and Meanness when it was  
unavoidable, but chose it; who sub-  
mitted to Suffering tho' he never de-  
served it, and who met with all the  
contempt and reproach imaginable,  
whilst he truly deserved the great-  
est Esteem and Reputation. Here is  
an Example that hath all the Ar-  
gument, and all the Encouragement  
that can be to the Imitation of it.  
Was he who had so regular a Will  
and Inclination, contented to have  
it crucified and thwarted? Did he  
who had an unquestionable right to  
all the Riches and Enjoyments of  
the World, renounce them all and  
embrace Poverty? Did he, to whose

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deep Wisdom and Judgment all Mankind ought to submit, condescend to the weakness of others, and *not please himself*? Did he, who never did the least thing in his whole Life that might justly stain or blemish his Reputation, patiently bear all sorts of contumely and reproach? And shall we think much to deny our selves in any of these? Such an Example is of greater Force and Authority than any Precept or Law. Well might our Lord, thus going before us, command us to follow him, saying, *If any man will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me.* If he thus denied himself, well may we, who have much less to deny, and much more Reason and Cause to do it; for as he argues, *The Disciple is not greater than his Master, nor the Servant than his Lord.* He did it Voluntarily and of Choice; it is our Duty: he did it for our sakes; we do it for our own: we did not deserve it of him; but he hath merited it of us.

Our Lord did not like the Pharisees  
give

give strict Precepts to others, which they themselves did not follow. They said, and did not; laid heavy burdens upon others, and grievous to be born, when they themselves would not touch them with one of their fingers: Nor like the Philosophers, who spake fine and glorious things of Goodness and Virtue, but did much like other men, gave strict Rules to others, but lived loosely themselves; and therefore it is no wonder that their Discourses had so little effect upon the Lives and Manners of men, and were so unavailable to the Reformation of the World. Precepts of great strictness and severity, are like to be obeyed very slowly and faintly, unless they be sweetned and made easie by the familiar practice of those that give them. In a way that is rugged and difficult, full of trouble and danger, it is not enough to bid men go on; but he that bids them, must go before them, and take them by the hand, and give them an Example to follow his steps; without this, Rules and Precepts are very dry things, and give but faint and cold En-  
D 4      couragement.

couragement. *Cesar's* Example prevailed much more upon his Souldiers, than his Word of Command. No Man ever discours'd better of Magnanimity and greatness of Mind, in great Dangers and Calamities, than *Tully* does; and yet when it came to the Tryal, no Man ever behaved himself more faintly, and shewed greater dejection of Mind, than he did; so that it is hard to say, whether his Discourses are more apt to raise, or his Example to damp a Man's Spirit. *Seneca* writes with wonderful wit and smartness, with great fineness and force, of Argument about the Contempt of the World and Wealth; but then to consider how he flowed in Wealth himself, and how intent he was to heap up Riches beyond measure, would make a Man more apt to despise *him*, than the World. So necessary is it that Precepts, especially of great difficulty, should be back'd and enforc'd by Example, and that severe Rules should be mollified, and made easie by the practice of those who prescribe them. And this our Lord took particular Care to



to do in those Precepts of his, which seem to offer the greatest violence to the common bent and inclination of humane Nature. Serm. 2.

And so he did likewise in those Virtues which are so difficult upon the account of Temptation from without, as well as of Inclination from within. Not to insist upon his firm resistance of all the Temptations to ambition, which made not the least impression upon him; the offer of *the Kingdoms of the world and the glory of them*, had no influence upon him. He was sometimes in great favour with the People, and mightily applauded by them, for *speaking as never man spake*, and doing such things, as no Man ever did: But he was as little moved by their applause, as he was dejected by their reproaches. When the People would have made him *King*, to qualifie him the better, as they thought, to be the *Messias*, he would not take so much notice of the offer, as to refuse it, but silently withdrew himself, that they knew not where to find him.

But

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But that which I shall particularly take notice of under this head, is his great Meekness, which is a very difficult Virtue; if we consider the peevishness and infirmity of humane Nature, and the frequent Temptations to Passion and Anger, which occur in humane life, and these very sudden and surprising, so that there is nothing wherein Wise Men do oftener betray their own weakness, than in the matter of sudden anger. *Moses* the greatest of all the Prophets that had been, and who it seems was naturally of a meek temper, having this Testimony given him by the Spirit of God, that *he was the meekest man upon earth*; yet he miscarried in this matter, and not being able to bear the continual perverseness of that People, lost his temper, and fell into an irregular Passion. But our Blessed Lord, whose temper was perpetually assaulted with the highest Provocations in all kinds, still maintained the Evenness and Meekness of his Spirit.

The dulness and slowness of his Disciples,

Disciples, to understand and believe what he had so plainly taught, and so often inculcated upon them, was a great trial of Patience; which yet provok'd him no farther, than to a just rebuke of their fault. The hardest words he ever gave them, were, *O unwise and slow of heart to believe! How long shall I suffer you?* And when he was in the height of his sorrow and trouble, and his Disciples were so unconcern'd for him, as to fall asleep, in the same breath that he reproves their drowsiness, he makes an excuse for it, *Can ye not watch with me one hour? The spirit indeed is willing; but the flesh is weak.* This carriage from his Friends and Followers, when he stood most in need of their Comfort and Assistance, and *his Soul was exceeding sorrowful, even to the death*, was a great Temptation to Anger, especially falling upon a sore and afflicted Mind; and yet it was so far from provoking his Anger, that it rather moved his pity toward them.

His sharp reproofs of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, were but a necessary severity, and a just expression of his indignation.

*The Life of Christ, an Example*

Vol. 10. indignation at the fulsom hypocrisie of such great Pretenders to Piety and Devotion; for *he knew their hearts.* His whipping of the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, the only Action of his Life in which there appears any transport of Anger, was no other but a becoming Zeal for the Honour of God's House, which he saw so notoriously Prophaned; which Zeal was warranted, after the Example of *Phineas*, by the extraordinary occasion of it. In all his other Actions, he was perfectly Meek and lowly in Spirit, void of Pride, one of the chief causes of inordinate anger. We cannot say he was never angry; but when ever he was so, which was very seldom, *he sinned not*; it was upon great and just occasion, and never to any undue degree.

And this is the more remarkable, because he was very apt to receive the impressions of other Passions; of Love and Pity, which easily moved him to Kindness and Compassion. He could not forbear to weep, when he saw *Lazarus* his Friends lamenting over his Grave, tho he knew the cause of their



their sorrow would soon be removed and turned into joy, by his resurrection to life. Nay he had not only this tenderness towards his Friends, but even to his greatest Enemies. When he looked upon *Jerusalem*, and foresaw the terrible revenge that God would take upon his Enemies and Murderers, and beheld at a great distance the dreadful Calamities that were coming upon them, he could not refrain from Tears. He allowed himself in these innocent and human Passions; but where there was danger of Transgressing, as there is in no Passion more than that of Anger, he was continually upon his guard, and govern'd himself with great care, and never gave way to it, but upon evident and just occasion; and was never transported to any undue degree.

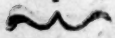
Serm. 2.

And yet he lived and died almost under continual Provocations to it; not only from his Friends and Followers, but from all sorts of Persons; Provocations of the highest nature; if the most spiteful reproaches and injurious usage, and the most cruel Persecutions  
and

~~~~~ and Sufferings from the hands of  
 Vol. 10. those whom he had by all ways endeavoured to oblige; if *the contradiction of sinners*, whom *he came to save*; in a word, if the greatest malice accompanied with the highest ingratitude; if any, if all of these be Provocations of a high nature; he was almost continually, living and dying, exercised with these. And how did he demean himself in the midst of all these provocations, with the greatest Meekness and Mildness imaginable, answering their bitterest reproaches and cruellest usage, either with calm reasonings, or with meek silence; that by the reasonableness and meekness of his answers and carriage, he might either convince or mollify them! When his Enemies charged him with the Profanation of the Sabbath, he only reasons the matter fairly with them, asking them whether *it was lawful to do good, or to do evil on the Sabbath day*; telling them that *the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*; bidding them *go and learn what that means, I will have mercy and not Sacrifice*. When they accused him for being a Magician, and casting
 out

out Devils, by the Prince of the Devils; he convinceth them by reason, that this was a malicious and groundless charge, telling them, that a Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand; and that if he, by Satan cast out Satan, his Kingdom was divided against it self and must fall. When they upbraided him for companying with publicans and sinners; he justifies the thing by telling them, that the whole have no need of the Physician, but the sick, that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. When they charged him with blasphemy, for saying to the man sick of the Palsie, Thy sins be forgiven thee; he only asks them this question, Which is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee? or Take up thy bed and walk? When they call'd him by the odious name of Impostor and Seducer of the people, he makes no sharp answer, but appeals to his miracles, and the works which he had done among them; as an unquestionable testimony that he came from God. When they took up stones to throw at him, he opposeth to this hard usage only soft gentle words, if by that means he might stay their rage, John 10. 32. Many good works have

Serm. 2.

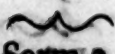

 have I shewed you from my father; for
 Vol. 10. *which of those works do ye stone me?* Thus
 upon all occasions he answers their
 malice and rage, not with boisterous
 passion, but by calm Reason and Ar-
 gument; and notwithstanding it had
 little effect, he continues this way to
 the last, and as the malice of his Ene-
 mies was invincible, so was his meek-
 ness. In his last Sufferings, when he
 was so rudely and injuriously treated
 at his tryal, and one of the high Priests
 Officers struck him, in the open face
 of the Court, he only says to him, *If*
I have spoken evil, bear witness of the
evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?
 What could be said more meekly?
 What more reasonably? And when
 in the extremity of his Sufferings, the
 High Priests, and the Souldiers, and
 the People, all joyned together to re-
 vile him, and insult over his misery,
 in the most barbarous and cruel man-
 ner; instead of breaking out into Passi-
 on in this anguish of his Soul, he pours
 out his Prayers to God on their behalf,
 and makes the most charitable Excuse
 and Apology for them, that their
 Crime was possibly capable of. *Father*
forgive them; for they know not what they
do.

do. While he felt the bitter effects of their Malice, he imputes it to their Ignorance. Here is an Example of meekness fit for the Son of God to give, and much more fit for the Sons of men to follow; for as the wise Son of Syrach says excellently, *Pride was not made for men, nor furious anger for him that was born of a Woman.*

And having such an Example left us of this great Virtue, let us do likewise, since as St. Peter tells us, *He suffered with all this Meekness and Patience, To leave us an Example, that ye might follow his steps; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatned not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* When we consider this Example, can we resent so highly every petty Injury and Provocation? And upon every slighting Word proceed to a Challenge and Quarrel, and entertain fierce and implacable thoughts of Revenge? When the Son of God with so much meekness endured the continual Contumacious of sinners, and put up
E such

such outrageous Affronts and Indignities from his Creatures, those ungrateful Wretches whom he had made, and whom he came to save, and for whom he offered to give that very Blood, which they so cruelly and maliciously shed, for the Expiation of their guilt?

To all which I shall add, his readiness to forgive Injuries, considering the Temptations he had to Wrath and Revenge, from the spiteful Reproaches, and injurious Calumnies, and continual Persecution of his bitter and implacable Enemies without a Cause; who pursued him with incessant Rage and Malice, and never gave over till they had wrought his ruin, and by false Accusations, and a most violent Prosecution, and seditious Tumults and Clamours, they had forc'd the *Roman* Governour, contrary to his Inclination, and the Convictions of his own Mind and Conscience, and against all Reason and Justice, to pass Sentence upon him, when he declared *he saw nothing in him worthy of Death*, and to condemn him to a most painful

and ignominious Death. Nor did  their Malice end here; but they aggravated his Sufferings with scurrilous Taunts and Reproaches, and all the Rudeness and Indignities imaginable; and yet all this injurious and cruel usage, did not provoke him to one revengeful thought; could not extort from him so much as one peevish, or misbecoming, or threatening Word. *When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not.* But notwithstanding all this Provocation, he was more ready to forgive the Injuries and Indignities they put upon him, than they could be to offer them, and implored the mercy and forgiveness of God for them, as heartily and as earnestly as they had solicited his Death and Destruction.

It is easie to give Precepts of forgiveness, to bid men *Love their enemies, bless them that curse them, do good to them that hate them, and pray for them that despitefully use them and persecute them, and to forgive our Brother that offends us, not only to seven times, but to seventy times seven.*

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without stint and limit: but the practice of this is exceeding difficult; for how hard do we find it to pass by little Provocations, and upon a very small Affront and Indignity offer'd to us, to suppress the thought and desire of Revenge, and to command our Passion from breaking out in Word or Deed? But much more difficult is it perfectly to forgive, to love our Enemies, to pray for them, and to be ready to do them good. Such a difficult Virtue as this had need of all sorts of inducements to engage us to the practice of it. And therefore our blessed Lord did not think it enough strictly to enjoin it, and to enforce it upon us by the most powerful Considerations, teaching us in our daily Prayers, to beg mercy and forgiveness of God upon this Condition, *That we forgive others*, and not to hope for it upon other Terms; telling us that as we demean our selves toward one another in this Case of Injuries and Provocations, so God will deal with us; *ye forgive men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will also forgive you but if ye forgive not men their Trespases*

passes, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your Trespases. Nothing can be urged upon us with greater force than this Duty is, because upon our practice and performance of it, all our hopes of mercy and forgiveness from God are suspended. But yet it is difficult after all this; and therefore to allure us more powerfully to the practice of it, our Lord hath given us the Example of it in the whole course of his Life; in which being continually assaulted with Injuries and Provocations, he had perpetual occasion for the practice of forgiveness; and that in greater Instances, and upon occasion of greater Injuries, than any of us are capable of receiving. He who could never stand in need of forgiveness from men, who needed none from God, who had it always in his Power to have revenged with ease, and to the utmost, all the Provocations and Affronts that were offer'd to him; he who had none of those powerful inducements to forgiveness which we have, was thus ready to forgive; and did it perpetually, upon the greatest, upon in-

numerable occasions; he forgave his Enemies all their ill Will toward him, and all their vile and malicious usage of him throughout his whole Life; but most remarkably at his Death, when the Provocations were greatest and most violent, when they fell thick and in storms upon him, and when they were most grievous and piercing, in the very Agony and Anguish of his Sufferings; in these hard and pressing Circumstances, he was so far from breathing out threatening and revenge against the Authors of his cruel Sufferings, that with his last Breath he did most effectually declare his free forgiveness of them, and perfect Charity toward them, by his fervent Prayer to God for them; *Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

5. And *Lastly*, Our Saviour is likewise a Pattern to us of the most needful Virtues, and for the practice whereof there is the greatest and most frequent occasion in Humane Life.

Several of these I have already mentioned

mentioned under the former heads; as Sincerity, which hath an universal influence upon all our actions, and is a principal ingredient into all the Duties and Services which we are to perform to God and Men; Humility and Meekness, for the exercise whereof there is almost continual occasion in all our Conversation with others. These have been spoken to, I shall therefore instance in some others, which are likewise of great and frequent use in human Life.

(1.) The great Humanity of his Carriage and Deportment, of which he gave manifold instances, in his free and familiar Conversation with all sorts of people. He did not despise the meanest. How familiarly did he talk with the Woman of *Samarita*? insomuch that his Disciples were offended at it, and *marvelled that he talk'd with her*. He did not decline the Conversation of the worst of Men, where he had any hope of making them better by it; and tho' his *companying with Publicans and Sinners* was often objected as matter of scandal to him, yet he would not for that reason neg-


 left any opportunity of doing good.
 Vol. 10. He was affable to his inferiours, to
 the meanest Person that had occasion
 to speak with him; yea *he rebuked his
 Disciples, for forbidding the little Chil-
 dren to come to him.* They would
 have kept them from him, because
 they could not imagine to what
 purpose they should be permitted to
 come to him: but tho' they were not
 capable of his instruction, yet they
 were of his kindness and blessing. *He
 took them up in his arms, and laid his
 hands upon them, and blessed them;*
 and he proposed them to his Disciples
 as Emblems of that innocency and
 simplicity, without which no Man
 shall enter into the Kingdom of
 God.

His Humanity likewise appeared in
 the Tenderness and Compassion of his
 Nature, toward all that were in want
 or misery of any kind. *He healed all
 manner of sicknesses and diseases among
 the people, and went about doing good.*
 And when his followers, by their long
 attendance upon him in desert and so-
 litary places, to hear his Doctrine,
 were pinched with hunger, he could
 not

not find in his Heart to dismiss them without some refreshment, and having no other means did it by a miracle. He was very apt to sympathize with the condition of others, *to weep with them that wept*, as he did with the Friends of *Lazarus* over his Grave: nay he had a tenderness for his Enemies; when he beheld *Jerusalem*, and the sad fate which hung over it for their obstinate impenitency, he could not refrain from Tears at the thoughts of it. Serm. 2.

Another Instance of his Humanity was his easiness to be entreated, and readiness to yield to the request of those who desired his Company, or implored his help and assistance. And as he was most ready to do good to all, so he did not disdain to receive kindness from any; complying chearfully with the desires of those, who invited him to their Houses, and accepting kindly any well-intended respect. How did he resent the extraordinary kindness of the devout Woman, who poured the Box of rich Ointment upon his head? taking care that the memory of it should be transmitted
to

to all Generations, and proclaimed
 Vol. 10. over the whole World, *Matth. 26.*
 13.

(2.) Another very needful Virtue, and for which our Lord was very Eminent, was his Neglect and Disregard of the opinion of men, in comparison of his Duty. As he was not affected, much less puffed up with their applause, (which is an Argument of a vain and light mind) so was he as little moved with their censures and reproaches, by which he was neither disordered in his Passions, nor discouraged from well doing. He took heed to his duty, and made sure to do the things which pleased God, and was not very solicitous what men said or thought of him. He observed in the *Pharisees*, how great a temptation and hindrance to the receiving of his Doctrine, an undue regard to the praise, and censure of men was. *They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*, as he tells us, *John 12. 43.* And *Ch. 5. 44.* *How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?* Not that we are to slight and neglect the

the opinion of others concerning our actions; that is Pride and self conceit; and our Lord himself was not so regardless of his reputation, as not to take great care to give no just occasion of censure, no needless handle to slander and calumny; he vindicated himself upon all occasions, and was ready to give a fair and reasonable account of his actions, to those who found fault with them, nay even maliciously carpt at them; he prudently avoided occasions of offence, and by wise and cautious answers, many times avoided the snares that were laid to bring him under obloquy and reproach: But in competition with his plain duty, he neither regarded the applause nor censures of men; he complied with them in nothing that was bad, to gain their good opinion and esteem; nor was he hinder'd and discouraged from any thing that was good, for fear of being ill spoken of, or of having a bad interpretation put upon his good actions. *Serm. 2.*

And this is a Virtue very necessary to a good Man, especially in bad times, and requires a good degree of forti-

Vol. 10. fortitude and firmness of resolution to make a man Master of it. And 'tis not more necessary than it is reasonable: for it is not in our power whether men shall speak well or ill of us; but it is in our power, whether we will do well or ill. It is many times impossible to please men, they are so divided in their opinions about Good and Evil; but we may make sure to please God, and to gain his Praise and Approbation, *whose Judgment is always according to truth.* It is a vain and endless thing to live up to the humours and opinions of men, which are variable and uncertain; but if we keep steady to our Duty, we live to the Consciences of men, which first or last will come to themselves, and come over to us, and approve of that which is good. This is, as St. Paul speaks, *to commend our selves to every Man's Conscience in the sight of God.*

(3.) Another Virtue for which there is great occasion in human life, and for which our Lord was very remarkable, was his contentedness in a mean

mean and poor Condition, and such
was his Condition to the very lowest Serm. 2.
degree. He was destitute of the
ordinary Conveniences and neces-
sary Supports of Life ; he lived
generally upon the Kindness and Cha-
rity of others, and when that failed,
and he wanted ordinary supports,
as he often did, he was maintained
by Miracle : And yet in this mean
and necessitous Condition, he had a
constant evenness and serenity of
Mind ; he had no *anxious care and
solicitude* upon him, *what he should
eat, and what he should drink, or
wherewithal he should be cloathed ;*
he never murmured at the unequal
Providence of God, never utter'd
one discontented or envious Word
at the Plenty and Prosperity of o-
thers ; he rather pitied the misfor-
tune of Rich and Great men, who
were expos'd to so many Temptati-
ons, that *it was very hard for them,*
in his opinion, *to be saved ;* but he
enjoyed himself, and served God,
and went about doing good, and
depended upon the Providence of
God for his daily Food ; and if at
any

 Vol. 10. any time that was wanting, he tells his Disciples, that He had meat to eat, which they knew not of; for it was his meat and drink to do the will of his Father. By all that appears in the History of his Life (and we are sure that it is true) no Man was ever poorer, and yet no Man ever more contented than he was; which is not only an Example of contentedness to those, whom the Providence of God hath placed in the extremity of meanness and want, but a much stronger and more forcible Argument of Contentment in every Condition. For discontent is not only the portion of the poor, but of those who have a competency, because they have not plenty; and many times of those who have plenty and abundance, because they are wanton and foolish, and know not what they would have; so that our Saviour, by giving an Example of Contentment to those of the poorest and meanest Condition, hath given it much more to those who are in better Circumstances, A narrow Fortune is Riches, in comparison of none; a Competency is Plenty, compared

pared with Poverty, and the want
or the ordinary Accommodations of Serm. 2.
Life. If the Son of God submitted
to the lowest and poorest Condition,
and bore it with so much evenness
and tranquillity of Mind; well may
we, if God call us to it. If he that
was *Heir of all things*, was destitute
of all things, and well contented
to be so; shall we murmur and
repine, if we be in the same Cir-
cumstances? If this Example be of
any force; (as it is certainly of the
greatest) should the Providence of
God see fit to reduce us to the
lowest Condition of want, we have
no reason for discontent; but if he
afford us a competency, we have
no colour and pretence for it, un-
less we think our selves better than
the Son of God, and can claim a
greater Right to the Possessions and
Enjoyments of this World, than he
that made it.

Before this Example, we might
have thought that Poverty and Mean-
ness had been a sign of God's ha-
tred and displeasure, or at least an
Argument of less love and regard;
but

~ but now that we see him, whom God Vol. 10. loved infinitely better than any Man in the World, to have been one of the poorest men that ever lived; this is a demonstration, that a Man may be entirely beloved of God, tho' he be in the poorest and most destitute condition; for in such a condition he thought fit to place *his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased.* And if Poverty be consistent with the highest degree of Gods love and favour; we may bear it contentedly: and if there be reason for contentment even in poverty; to be discontented in any condition that is above it, is shameful and intolerable. Of such force is this Example of our Lord, to banish discontent from any condition we are liable to in this World. The

(4.) And *last* Virtue I shall Instance in, and for the exercise whereof there is very great and frequent occasion in human life, is Patience under Sufferings, and such a perfect resignation of our selves to the Will of God, that whatever pleaseth him should please us, how distastful and grievous soe-

ver it be. And of this Virtue our
 blessed Saviour was the greatest Ex-
 ample that ever was; his whole Life
 from his Birth to his Death was
 made up of Persecution and Pati-
 ence, and was a continual exercise
 of this Virtue. There had been great
 Examples in all Ages of the Sufferings
 and Patience of good men, which
 we might propound to our selves
 with great Advantage, and so St.
 James exhorts the Christians to do,
Jam. 5. 10. Take, my Brethren, the
Prophets, who have spoken in the name
of the Lord, for an Example of suf-
fering affliction, and of patience. Job
 especially was a most eminent Ex-
 ample in this kind. Ye have heard,
 says he, *of the patience of Job.* And
 all these Examples are of great Use,
 and considerable Arguments to this
 Virtue; but the Pattern of our
 Lord's Sufferings and Patience is a
 greater Example, and a more pow-
 erful Argument than all these. His
 Sufferings were far greater than any
 Man's ever were. Never was any sor-
 row like to his sorrow, wherewith the
 Lord afflicted him in the day of his
 fierce anger: And his Patience was

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greater

~~~~~  
 Vol. 10. greater than any Man's ever was,  
 not only because he suffered more  
 than any one of the Sons of men ever  
 did, but because he suffered without  
 Cause, being perfectly innocent and  
 free from the least Personal Fault  
 and Guilt. Well may we *bear the In-*  
*dignation of the Lord patiently,* be-  
*cause we have sinned against him.*  
 Whatever we suffer, our Conscien-  
 ces tell us we have deserved it all,  
 and much more from the hand of  
 God, and *that our Punishment is al-*  
*ways less than our Iniquities have*  
*deserved.* Sin is at the bottom of all  
 our Sufferings, and if we be buffeted  
 for our faults, we ought to take it  
 patiently. Upon this Consideration  
 St. Peter recommends to us the Ex-  
 ample of our Lord's Sufferings and  
 Patience, as a powerful Argument  
 to work the same Temper and Dis-  
 position in us, 1 Pet. 2. 20, 21. *For*  
*what glory is it, if when ye be buf-*  
*feted for your faults, ye take it pa-*  
*tiently? But if when ye do well and*  
*suffer for it, ye take it patiently, that*  
*is acceptable with God.* For hereunto  
 were ye called: for Christ also suffered  
 for us, leaving us an Example, that

we should follow his steps, who did  
no sin. Where the Apostle insinu-  
ates a twofold difference between  
our Lord's Sufferings for us, and  
ours. He suffered for us: but we upon  
our own account, and for our own  
faults. He was perfectly innocent,  
He had no sin, and yet he suffered  
with so much Patience: much more  
ought we; for by how much the  
more Guilt, so much the greater  
reason for Patience, and the more  
innocent the Person is that suffers,  
so much the more perfect and com-  
mendable is his Patience.

Serm. 2.

So that the greatness of our  
Lord's Sufferings, considered together  
with his perfect innocency, gives his  
Example a peculiar Force and Ad-  
vantage above all other Examples  
whatsoever. And therefore the Apo-  
stle to the *Hebrews*, after a great num-  
ber of Examples of the Persecution  
and Patience of the Saints in all  
ages, not content with these, he  
adds that of our Lord, as the most  
perfect and powerful Example of all  
others, *Heb. 12. 1, 2, 3. Wherefore*  
*seeing we also are compassed about with*

*such a cloud of Witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our Faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the shame. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds. Such contradiction of sinners; such as no Man ever endured: and yet he bore all this, not with a stoical and stupid insensibility, but with a true Patience. For no Man had greater apprehensions of Suffering, and a more quick and tender sense of it, than he had. He had not only the more manly Virtues of Wisdom, and Resolution, and Constancy; but was cloathed also with the softer Passions of Humane Nature, Meekness, and Compassion, and Grief, and a tender sense of Pain and Suffering. He took our infirmities, says the Prophet, and bore our Grievs. And this he exprest both in his Agony in the Garden, and in his Behaviour upon the Cross; he did not despise Pain, but dreaded it, and yet submitted to it; he did not out-brave his Sufferings, but bore them decently;*



ly; he had a Humane Sense of them, but underwent them with a Divine Patience, resigning himself absolutely to the Will of God, when he saw them coming; and when they were upon him, expressing a great sense of Pain, without the least sign of impatience. And hereby he was a Pattern accommodated to the weakest and tenderest of Mankind; he did not give us an extravagant Example of Bravery, and a sturdy Resolution; but, which was much fitter for us, of a patient submission to the Will of God, under a great sense of Suffering.

Before I come to the *fifth* and *last* Advantage of our Lord's Example, it will be requisite to clear what hath been said from *three* or *four* obvious Objections. But this I shall reserve for another Discourse.

of the most merciful Father.

ly: he had a humane sense of them, but underwent them with a Divine Patience, resigning himself absolute-ly to the Will of God, when he saw them coming; and when they were upon him, expelling a great deal of Pain, without the least sign of impa-ience. And hereby he was a Pattern accommodated to the weak, and tenderest of Mankind: he did not give us an extravagant Example of Bravery and a sturdy Resolution; but which was much fitter for us, of a great submission to the Will of God, under a great sense of Suffering.

Before I come to the Fifth and last Advantage of our Lord's Example, it will be requisite to clear what hath been said from some of the obvious Objections. But this I shall reserve for another Discourse.

# SERMON III.

Preach'd *March 25. 1686.*

The Life of Jesus Christ consider'd,  
as our Example.

The Third Sermon on this Text.

1 P E T. II. 21.

— *Leaving us an Example, that ye  
should follow his steps.*

**T**HE Example of Christ is an  
Argument never unseasonable,  
and tho' it be somewhat foreign to  
the occasion of *this day*, yet it will  
afford us something not improper to  
be considered by us, concerning the  
F 4 blessed

*Vol. 10* blessed Mother of our Lord. I have handled this Argument of our Lord's Example very largely, and among other things, have shewn the manifold Advantages of it, in these following respects.

I. That the Example of our Lord is a most absolute and perfect Pattern, being the Life of God, in the Nature and Likeness of Man.

II. A most Familiar and Easie Example, in which we see the several Virtues of a good Life practised, in such Instances, and upon such Occasions, as do frequently happen in human Life.

III. It is an Encouraging Example; nothing being more apt to give life to good Resolutions and Endeavours, than to see all that which God requires of us, performed by one in our own Nature, and a Man as like our selves, as it is possible for a perfect Pattern to be.

IV. It is likewise an universal Example, calculated as equally as is possible



ble for all Conditions and Capacities of men, and fitted for general direction and imitation of all sorts of Virtue and Goodness; such Virtues as are the greatest and most substantial, the most rare and unusual, the most useful and beneficial to others, the most hard and difficult to be practised, and for the exercise whereof, there is the greatest and most frequent occasion in human life. There remains now only to be spoken to, the

*Serm. 3.*

V. And last Advantage, which I mentioned of our Lord's Example, That it is in the Nature of it, very powerful to engage and oblige all men to the imitation of it. But before I enter upon this, I proposed to clear what hath been already said concerning our Lord's Example, from *three or four* obvious Objections.

The *First* Objection is, That a great part of our Saviour's Life consisted of miraculous Actions, wherein we cannot imitate him.

This is very true; and for that very Reason, because we cannot imitate him

him herein, we are not obliged to do it: but we may imitate the Compassion and Charity which he shewed in his Miracles, by such ways, and in such effects, as are within the compass of our power. We are not *Anointed* as he was, *with the Holy Ghost and with Power, to heal all manner of sickness and disease:* but we may go about doing good, as he did, so far as we have ability and opportunity; we may Comfort those in their sickness and distress, whom we are not able in a miraculous manner to recover and relieve; and in Diseases that are curable, we may help the poorer at the expence of our Charity, and do that by slower and ordinary means, which our Saviour did by a word in an instant.

*Secondly,* Against the Universality of our Saviour's Example, it is Objected, That he hath given us no Pattern of some Conditions and Relations of Life, for which there seems to have been as great need and reason, as for any other.

To this I answer, That tho' his single state of life did hinder him from being

being formally an Example as to some of the most common Relations, as of *Serm. 3.*  
a Father, and a Husband; yet he was virtually so in the Principle and Practice of universal Charity; which Principle, if it be truly rooted in us, will sufficiently guide and direct us in the Duties of particular Relations.

And whereas it is further objected, That he hath left us no Example of that, which by many is esteemed the only Religious State of Life, *viz.* Perfect Retirement from the World, for the more devout serving of God, and freeing us from the Temptations of the World, such as is that of *Monks* and *Hermits*. This perhaps may seem to some a great oversight and omission: but our Lord in great Wisdom thought fit to give a Pattern of a quite different sort of Life, which was not to flee the Conversation of men, and to live in a Monastery or a Wilderness; but to do good among men, to live in the World with great freedom, and with great innocency. He did indeed sometimes retire himself, for the more free and private exercise of Devotion; as  
we

~~~~~ we ought to do: but he past his Life  
 Vol. 10. chiefly in the Conversation of men,
 that they might have all the Benefit
 that was possible, of his Instruction
 and Example. We read that *he was*
carried into the Wilderネス to be tempted;
 but not that he lived there, to avoid
 temptation. He hath given us an Ex-
 ample of denying the World, without
 leaving it; and of renouncing not on-
 ly the Pomp and Vanity, but even the
 lawful Enjoyments and Conveniences
 of Life, when it may serve to any
 good end, either of Glory to God, or
 of Advantage to men; teaching us
 hereby, that Charity is a Duty, no
 less necessary than Devotion; that we
 cannot serve God better, than by en-
 deavouring the Good and Happiness
 of men. So that if our Saviour's Ex-
 ample be of Authority with us, that
 will soon decide, which is the most
 perfect State of Life, to go out of the
 World, or to live innocently and use-
 fully in it. And since neither our Savi-
 our, nor his Apostles have recom-
 mended it to us, by their Example,
 nor by one word of Precept, or Coun-
 sel tending that way, it seems very
 plain, that they did not esteem Mon-
 kery

her, the most perfect, much less the only Religious State of Life. There could not have been so deep a silence throughout the new Testament concerning so important a piece of Religion, as the Church of Rome would bear us in hand this is: For to be profest of some Monastical Order they call *entring into Religion*, and they speak of it, as the most direct and ready way to Heaven; and not only so, but they give fair encouragement to believe, that to die, or be buried in a *Monk's Habit*, will go a great way (they are loth to tell us how far) in the carrying of a bad Man towards Heaven, or at least to the abatement of his pain in Purgatory.

Thirdly, It is Objected, That some particulars of our Saviour's Carriage towards Rulers and Magistrates seem liable to exception, and not proper for our imitation; as his bold and free reproofs of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, many of whom were chief Rulers, and of greatest Authority among them; and his Message to *Herod*, *Go and tell that fox*. This opprobrious and reproachful treatment of Magistrates, seems directly

~~~~ rectly contrary to an exprefs Law of  
 Vol. 10. God, *Exod. 22. 28. Thou shalt not re-  
 vile the Gods, or Judges, nor speak evil  
 of the ruler of thy people.*

But to this the answer is plain, That our Lord used this freedom by the Virtue and Privilege of his Prophetical Office, and of his immediate Commission from God; it being the Office of Prophets, and a part of their Commission, to reprove Kings and Rulers, with all freedom and plainness, because they were really superiour to them in the Execution of that Office. In all positive Laws of respect to Superiors, there is an Exception of the Divine Commission; because in that case, the Prophet speaks in the name, and by the Authority of one infinitely greater than the greatest upon Earth; as in the Lord's Name and by his Commission, any Man may check inferiour Magistrates, and that in such a manner as would be rudeness and insolence, for any other not so warranted to do it. And of this there are manifold Examples in the Prophets of the Old Testament; and what the tenour of their Commission was, we may see in that

that given to the Prophet Jeremiah, Chap. I. Verse 10. Behold I have Serim. 3.  
 set thee over the Nations, and over  
 the Kingdoms, to root out, and to  
 pull up, and to destroy, and to throw  
 down, to build and to plant, (that  
 is to denounce Judgment and Ca-  
 lamities, or Peace and Prosperi-  
 ty to them) and ver. 17, 18. Thou  
 therefore gird up thy Loines, and arise  
 and speak unto them; all that I com-  
 mand thee; be not dismayed at their  
 faces, lest I confound thee before them;  
 for behold I have made thee this day  
 a fenced City, and an Iron Pillar,  
 and a Brazen Wall against the whole  
 Land, against the Kings of Judah,  
 against the Princes thereof, against the  
 Priests thereof, and against the people of  
 the Land. This Commission set him  
 above them all in the discharge of  
 his Office. And therefore what our  
 Lord did in this kind, by Virtue of  
 an extraordinary Commission, and  
 the privilege of a Prophet imme-  
 diately sent by God, is not to be  
 drawn into Example in ordinary Ca-  
 ses: for we may do that by special  
 Commission from God, which the  
 ordinary Rules of Duty and Re-  
 spect

Vol. 10.  spect to Princes and Governours will by no means allow to be done.

The *Fourth* and *Last* Objection is, That our blessed Saviour does not seem to bear himself with that Duty and Respect towards his Mother, which that Relation seems to require. And to speak according to the first appearance of things, this seems to be of all other, the most exceptionable part of his Life, and to require some particular and extraordinary Reason, not so obvious at first sight, for the Vindication of it.

There are to my best Remembrance and Observation, but *five* passages, in the History of our Saviour's Life, concerning his Carriage towards his Mother, and his Discourse with her, and of her; in all which he seems rather to Treat her with some appearance of Neglect, than with any great shew of Reverence and Respect. Not that we are to imagine, but that he did pay her an entire Duty; for we know that *he fulfilled all righteousness*: But for Reasons best known to his infinite Wisdom, he thought



thought fit very much to conceal it  
in his publick Behaviour, and to Serm. 3.  
have as little notice taken of it in  
the History of his Life.

And the *First Passage* is *Luke 2. 48.*  
When his Parents having left him,  
at last found him in the Temple disputing  
among the Doctors; and his Mother  
reproved him: *Son why hast thou  
thus dealt with us? Behold, thy Fa-  
ther and I have sought thee sorrowing.*  
He gives them this short and obscure  
answer, which they knew not what  
to make of, *How is it that ye sought  
me? Wist ye not that I must be about  
my Father's business?* This hapen'd  
when he was but *twelve years old.*  
And that we may not think, that  
during his Minority, he did ordina-  
rily assume this Behaviour towards  
his Parents; but only upon this first  
Essay of his Publick Appearance,  
the Evangelist purposely adds, *ver. 51.*  
*that he went down with his Pa-  
rents to Nazareth, and was subject to  
them.*

The *Second Passage* is *John 2. 4.*  
When his Mother desiring him to  
G work

work a Miracle, at his first appearance  
 Vol. 10. and entrance upon his Publick Ministry, He takes occasion to declare to her, that he was discharged from her Conduct and Government, and this in Terms to all appearance of no great respect. *Woman what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.* Greg. Nyssen reads both Sentences with an Interrogation, *What have I to do with thee? Is not mine hour now come?* As if he had said, "Why dost thou interpose in these matters? Is not the time come, that I am to enter upon my Office; and in the discharge of it, to be directed by God, and none else?"

The Third Passage is *Matth. 12. 47.* When he was told that his Mother and his Brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him: *Who is my Mother, says he, and who are my Brethren?* And pointing to his Disciples, *Behold my Mother and my Brethren; for whosoever shall do the Will of my Father, which is in Heaven, the same is my Mother and Sister and Brother.* Here is but little appearance of regard

gard; for we do not find, that he left the business he was about, to speak with her when she desired it. Nor it seems did she understand her Power so well as the Church of Rome hath done since, when (as is to be seen in some of their Mass-books) they address to her in these Terms, *Jure matris impera Redemptori*, By the authority of a Mother, command the Redeemer.

The Fourth Passage is not much different from the former, *Luke 11. 27*. When a certain Woman said to him, *Blessed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou hast suck'd*; he said, *yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it*. He does not deny what was said in Honour of her; but turns his Discourse another way; and foreseeing the danger of a Superstitious Veneration of her, he seems to bring her down to the same level with all sincere Christians; teaching us, that no external Privilege or Relation, how glorious soever, no not that of being the Mother of the Son of God, was so valuable, as doing the Will of God. Yea rather,

*~ blessed are they that hear the word of*  
 Vol. 10. *God and keep it.*

The Last Passage is at the time of his Death, *John 19. 25, 26, 27.* Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, his Mother. When Jesus therefore saw his Mother, and the Disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his Mother, Woman, behold thy Son: Then saith he to the Disciple, behold thy Mother. And from that hour that Disciple took her unto his own home. Here indeed he shewed his great Kindness and Concernment for her, in committing her to the Care of his best beloved Friend: but yet without any extraordinary Demonstration of respect in the manner of it.

These are all the Passages I know in the Gospel, which concern our Lord's Carriage towards his Mother, which upon the whole matter is so strange, that we cannot imagine but there must be some special and extraordinary reason for it; and we who have lived to see and know



what hath hapen'd in the Christian World, are now able to give a better account of this great Caution and Reservedness in his Behaviour towards her; namely, that out of his infinite Wisdom and Foresight, he so demeaned himself toward her, that he might lay no Temptation before men, nor give the least occasion to the Idolizing of her. He always call'd her *Woman*; and by the privilege of his Divinity and high Office, hardly seems to pay her the respect due to a Mother, that he might restrain all Christians from worshipping her as a Deity; or if they did, that they might have no colour or excuse for it, from any thing he said or did. This is so probable an account of that which might otherwise seem so unaccountable, that I perswade my self, that all unprejudiced Persons will readily assent to it. And which is farther remarkable in this matter, the Apostles of our Lord in all their Writings use the same reservedness, and no doubt, by the direction of the same Spirit, concerning the blessed Mother of our Lord. For throughout the History of

Serm. 3.

the *Acts*, and all the *Epistles* of the  
 Vol. 10. *Apostles*, there is but once mention  
 made of her, and that only by the bye,  
*Acts* 1. 14. where it is said, that  
*The Disciples all continued with one ac-*  
*cord in Prayer and supplication, with*  
*the women, and Mary the Mother of Je-*  
*sus.* So far are they from proposing  
 her for an Object of our Worship, that  
 they only once make mention of her,  
 and that joyning with others in Prayer  
 and Supplication to God, without  
 any special remark concerning her;  
 much less do they speak of any devo-  
 tion paid to her.

And surely if This blessed among Wo-  
 men, the Mother of our Lord, (for I  
 keep to the Titles which the Scripture  
 gives her) have any sense of what we  
 do here below, she cannot but look  
 down with the greatest disdain upon  
 that Sacrilegious and Idolatrous Wor-  
 ship which is paid to her, to the high  
 Dishonour of the great God and our  
 Saviour, and the infinite scandal of  
 his Religion. How can she without  
 indignation behold how they play  
 the fool in the Church of Rome about  
 her; What an Idol they make of her  
 Image;

Image; and with what Follies they give Divine honour to it? How they place her in their Idolatrous Pictures in equal rank with *the blessed Trinity*, and turn the Salutation of the Angel, *Ave Maria, Hail Mary full of grace*, into a kind of Prayer; and in their *beadrol* of Devotion repeat it ten times, for once that they say *the Lord's Prayer*, as of greater Virtue and Efficacy? And indeed they almost juggle out the Devotion due to Almighty God, and our Blessed Saviour, by their endless Idolatry to her.

So that the greater part of their Religion, both publick and private, is made up of that, which was no part at all of the Religion of the Apostles and Primitive Christians; nay, which plainly contradicts it: for *that* expressly teacheth us, that there is but one Object of our Prayers, and one Mediator by whom we are to make our Addresses to God. *There is one God; and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus*, says St. Paul, when he gives a standing Rule concerning Prayer in the Christian Church. And yet notwithstanding

Vol. 10. all the care that our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles could take, to prevent gross Idolatry of the blessed Mother of our Lord, how blindly and wilfully have the Church of Rome run into it? And in despite of the clearest Evidence and Conviction, do obstinately and impudently persist in it, and justify themselves in so abominable a Practice. I come now to the

V. And *last* Advantage of our Lord's Example, that it is in the Nature of it very powerful, to engage and oblige all men to the imitation of it.

It is almost equally calculated for Persons of all Capacities and Conditions, for the wise and the weak, for those of high and low degree: for all men are alike concerned to be happy. And the imitation of this Example is the most ready and direct way to it, the most effectual Means we can use to compass this great and Universal end; nay it is not only the Means, but the End, the best and most essential part of it. To be like our Lord, is to be as good as it is possible for men to be; and



and Goodness is the highest perfection that any Being is capable of; and the Perfection of every Being is its Happiness. *Serm. 3.*

There is a kind of contagion in all Examples; men are very apt to do what they see others do, tho' it be very bad: every days experience furnisheth us with many and sad instances of the influence of bad Examples: but there are peculiar Charms in that which is good and excellent. A perfect Pattern of goodness does strongly allure and invite to the imitation of it; and a great Example of Virtue, to a well disposed mind is a mighty Temptation, and apt to inspirit us with good resolutions, to endeavour after that in our selves, which we so much esteem and admire in others. And such is the Example of our Lord, perfect as is possible, and yet obvious to common imitation, and as much fitted for the general direction of Mankind, in all sorts of Virtue and Goodness, as any one single Example can be imagined to be.

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The Virtues of his Life are pure, without any mixture of Infirmitie and Imperfection. He had Humility without meanness of Spirit; Innocency without weakness; Wisdom without cunning; and Constancy and Resolution in that which was good, without stiffness of conceit, and peremptoriness of humour; in a word, his Virtues were shining without vanity, heroical without any thing of transport, and very extraordinary without being in the least extravagant.

His life was even and of one tenour, quiet and without noise and tumult, always imployed about the same work, in doing the things which pleased God, and were of greatest Benefit and Advantage to men. Who would not write after such a Copy; so perfect, and yet so familiar, and fit for our imitation? Who would not be ambitious to live the life which God lived, when he was pleased to become Man and dwell among us?

We are ambitious to imitate those whom

whom we esteem, and are apt to have their Example in great dearness and regard, from whom we have received great kindness and mighty Benefits. This Pattern which our Religion proposeth to us, is the Example of one whom we ought to reverence, and whom we have reason to love above any Person in the World; 'tis the Example of our Lord and Master, of our Sovereign and our Saviour, of the Founder of our Religion, and of the Author and Finisher of our faith; it is an Example that carries Authority with it, and Commands our imitation. *You call me Lord and Master,* says he himself, recommending to us the Example of his own humility, *John 13. 13, 14. You call me Lord and Master, and ye say well; for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master have washt your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet, that is, stoop to the lowest and meanest office to serve one another; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*

Yet farther, 'tis the Example of our best Friend, and greatest Benefactor.

of

~ of him who laid down his life for us,  
Vol. 10. and sealed his love to us with his own  
Blood, and while we were bitter Enemies to him, did and suffer'd more  
for us, than any Man ever did for his  
dearest friend. How powerfully must  
such a Pattern recommend Goodness  
and Kindness and Compassion to us,  
who have had so much Comfort and  
Advantage from them? Had not the  
Son of God commiserated our Case,  
and pitied and relieved us in our low  
and wretched Condition, we had  
been extremely and for ever miserable,  
beyond all imagination, and past  
all remedy. All the kindness and compassion,  
all the mercy and forgiveness  
he would have us practise towards  
one another, he himself first exercised  
upon us; and surely we have a much  
greater obligation upon us to the practice  
of these Virtues, than he had.  
For he did all this for our sakes: we  
do it for our own. We have a natural  
obligation, both in point of duty  
and interest: his was voluntary, and  
what he took upon himself, that he  
might at once be a Saviour and an Example  
to us. He that commands us  
to do good to others, was our great  
Benefactor;



Benefactor; he that requires us to forgive our Enemies, shed his own Blood *Serm. 3.* for the forgiveness of our sins; while we were Enemies to him, laid down his Life for us, making himself the Example of that Goodness, which he Commands us to show to others.

Are any of us reduced to poverty and want? Let us think of him, who *Being Lord of all, had not where to lay his head; who being rich, for our sakes became a beggar, that we through his poverty might be made rich.* Are we Persecuted for Righteousness sake, and exercised with Sufferings and Reproaches? *Let us run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the shame.*

When we are ready to be discouraged in well-doing, by the opposition we meet withal from the ingratitude of men, and the malicious interpretation of our good actions, perverting the best things, done with the best mind

Mind and to the best Ends, to some ill purpose and design, *Consider him who endured such contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest you be weary and faint in your minds.*

Can we be proud; when the Son of God *humbled himself and became of no Reputation; emptied himself of all his Glory, and was contented to be despised and rejected of men?* Shall we be covetous, and thirst after the things of this World; when we consider how the Son of God despised them, and trampled upon them? Shall we Contemn and Despise the Poor; nay, can we chuse but esteem them for his sake, whom they resemble, and whose low and indigent Condition in the World hath made Poverty, not only tolerable, but glorious? Can we be peevish and froward, and apt to fly out into Passion upon every little occasion; when we consider the meekness of the Son of God, and with what serenity and evenness of Mind he demeaned himself, under great and continual Provocations? Shall we be discontented in any Condition;

on; when we consider how contented the Son of God was in the meanest and most destitute Condition; how he welcomed all events, and was so perfectly resigned to the Will of his Heavenly Father, that whatsoever pleased God pleased him? Shall we be so ready to separate from the Communion of the Church of God, upon pretence of something that we think amiss, or less pure and perfect; (which will always be in this World) when the Son of God lived and dyed in the Communion of a Church guilty of great Corruptions, both in Doctrine and Practice, such as can with no colour be objected to ours?

Shall we resent Injuries, Slanders and Calumnies so heinously, as to be out of all Patience; when we consider with what meekness of Temper, and how little disturbance of Mind the Son of God bore all these? How he gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that pluck'd off the hair, and withheld not his face from shame and spitting? How he was led as a Lamb to the slaughter,

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*slaughter, and as the Sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth; being reviled, he reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously? Such vile and barbarous usage the Son of God met withal; and yet under all this, he possesseth his Soul in patience: and do we expect to be better treated than he was? Was Goodness it self contented to be traduced and evil spoken of, perfect Innocence to be slandered and persecuted: and shall we who are Sinners, great Sinners, think our selves worthy to escape these things, and too good to have that done to us, which was done to one infinitely better than we are? It is our Lord's own Argument, and there is great Weight and Reason in it, If the World hate you; ye know that it hated me, before it hated you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The Servant is not greater than the Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; it is enough for the Disciple, that he be as his Master, and the Servant as his Lord; if they have called the Master of the House Beelze-*



Beelzebub, how much more shall they call  
them of the household? *Serm. 3.*

Can we entertain thoughts of Re-  
venge, when we have such a Pattern  
of forgiving before us, who poured  
out his Blood for the expiation of  
the guilt of them that shed it, and  
spent his last Breath in fervent and  
charitable Prayers for his Betrayers  
and Murderers? *Lord endow us with  
the like Temper: but do not try us with  
the like Sufferings.*

Thus by setting the Example of  
our Lord before us, and keeping  
his Pattern always in our Eye, we  
may continually correct all our own  
errors and Defects, all the Distem-  
pers of our Minds, and the Faults  
and Irregularities of our Lives; we  
may argue our selves into all kind  
of Virtue and Goodness, and from  
such an Example be strongly exci-  
ted, and sweetly led to the practise  
of it.

Let us not be discouraged by the  
consideration of our own weakness:  
he who hath given us such an

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Example of Virtue, is ready likewise to give us his Holy Spirit, to assist and enable us to conform our selves to this Pattern of our Lord and Master, and to follow the blessed steps of his Holy Life.

*Now the God of Peace, &c.*

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Thus by looking the Example of  
 our Lord before us, and keeping  
 his Pattern always in our eye, we  
 may continually correct all our own  
 faults and defects, all the Disorders  
 of our Minds, and the Faults  
 and Irregularities of our Lives: we  
 may bring our selves into all kind  
 of Virtues and Goodness, and from  
 an Example be strongly excite  
 to follow the blessed steps of the

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# SERMON IV.

The Sufferings of Christ consider'd,  
as a proper Means of our Sal-  
vation.

I C O R. I. 23, 24.

*ut we preach Christ crucified, unto the  
Jews a stumbling block, and unto the  
Greeks foolishness: But unto them  
which are called, both Jews and  
Greeks, Christ the power of God, and  
the wisdom of God.*

THE Sufferings of the Son of  
God for the sins of men, as  
they are a Subject never improper to  
insisted on, so are they more e-  
specially

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 Vol. 10 specially seasonable at this time, *
 ~~~~~  
 Preach- which the Christian Church hath  
 ed on for so many Ages set apart for the  
 Good- solemn Commemoration of them, in  
 Friday. order to our more due preparation  
 for the receiving of the Sacrament at  
*Easter*; which next after *the Lord's*  
*day* (which was set apart by the A-  
 postles for a weekly Commemoration  
 of our Saviour's Resurrection) is the  
 first and most solemn Festival that  
 is taken notice of in Ecclesiastical  
 Antiquity, to be generally observed  
 by Christians; at which time all  
 Christians that were admitted to  
 those sacred Mysteries, did receive  
 the holy Sacrament; and for this  
 reason, I have pitched upon this  
 Subject at this time.

Among all the Prejudices that were  
 raised against the Christian Religion,  
 when it first appeared in the World,  
 this was the greatest of all other,  
 that the first Author of this Doctrine,  
 should come to so miserable and  
 shameful an end, as to die upon the  
 Cross; that *the Son of God* should  
 be deliver'd into the hands of men,  
 to be so cruelly and ignominiously  
 handled



handled. This both *Jews* and *Greeks* laid hold on, as the most popular Objection against Christianity, and matter of just Reproach to that Religion, which pretended to be brought from Heaven by the Son of God: for tho' he call'd himself the Son of God; yet he died like a Man, and not only so, but suffer'd as a Malefactor.

But, notwithstanding the Odium of this Objection, the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour, who were sent by him to publish his Doctrine to the World, did not in the least endeavour to hide and dissemble the matter; but did openly and without disguise declare to the World, that he in whom they believed, and endeavoured to perswade others to believe, was, for *speaking the truth, which he had heard from God*, arraigned at *Jerusalem*, and there by *wicked hands* crucified and slain. And tho' they knew that this seemed very foolish and absurd, both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, whom they designed to convert to Christianity, and did extreamly prejudice them against it; yet never-

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theless they persisted in the course they had begun, leaving God to do his own work, in his own way; and they found the success of it. For tho' it was a very plain story which they told the World, and appeared even ridiculous to those who thought themselves the wisest and ablest Judges of these matters; yet being the Truth of God, it had a mighty efficacy upon the minds of men, notwithstanding all the prejudice that was raised against it. *It pleased God by the foolishness of Preaching, to save them that believe; by this Doctrine, which seemed so absurd to human Reason, to gain many to the belief and entertainment of it.*

Indeed it was not suited to the Genius either of the *Jews* or *Gentiles*; for they, according to their different ways of Institution, expected quite another thing. *Ver. 22. The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after Wisdom. The Jews require a sign;* they expected the Apostles should have given some extraordinary Testimony from Heaven, such as was *Elias* his calling for fire down from Heaven, to consume

consume those that opposed and resisted them. Such things as these they read of the Prophets in their Law, and they expected the *Messias* should do the same, and greater things. And tho' in truth he did so, wrought more and greater Miracles than *Moses* and all the Prophets had done before him, yet their curiosity was not satisfied; and notwithstanding the great works which he did among them, they were continually importuning him for a sign, *Matth. 12. 38. Then certain of the Scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.* This seems a strange and unreasonable demand, considering the many and great works he had done among them, which were so generally known. So that in all probability, it was some particular and peculiar kind of Miracle which they desired, as appears from *Matth. 16. 1. The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting, desired him that he would shew them a sign from Heaven.* He had wrought many Miracles on Earth, in healing the Sick, and opening the Eyes of the Blind, and the Ears of the Deaf, in cleansing the Lepers, and making the

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Vol. 10. *Lame to Walk;* but these they looked upon as an inferiour sort of Miracles, here was all this while no extraordinary thing immediately *from Heaven*, if they could once see *that*, they would be satisfied. But when no such thing was done, and at last God permitted him to die upon the Cross, as an Impostor and Seditious Person, and it appeared plainly that he, who pretended to free others from Diseases, could not save himself from Death; this confirmed them in their unbelief, and upon good Reason as they thought. And that this was a sign which they particularly expected, and thought they had cause so to do, appears by their upbraiding of him with the want of it in the time of his Suffering, *Matth. 27. 39. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it up in three days, save thy self; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.* And it was not only the malice and ignorance of the common People that objected this to him; but even the Priests, and Scribes, and Elders, insisted upon the same thing, *Ver. 41, 42, 43. Like-*
wise

as a proper Means of our Salvation.

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wise also the chief Priests mocking him, with the Scribes and Elders, said, He saved others, himself he cannot save: If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God. By this passage you see what it was the Jews expected; that if our Saviour had been the Son of God, he should have saved himself; when they went about to Crucifie him, that God should have rescued him out of their hands, and given some extraordinary testimony from Heaven to his innocency; and for this Reason, the Preaching of Christ Crucified was very offensive to them. The Jews require a sign: but we preach Christ Crucified.

Such was the temper and disposition of the Jews. But now the Gentiles, according to their way of Institution, they expected that the Apostles should have discoursed to them upon Philosophical Principles, and have demonstrated things to them in their way. The Greeks seek after Wisdom; they were great searchers after Wisdom and Knowledge,

Knowledge, and they valued nothing but what had the appearance of it, and what was delivered with great sharpness of Wit and Reasoning, and set off with Art and Eloquence. Had the Apostles pretended to some new Theory of Natural or Moral Philosophy, and discoursed to them about the first Principles of all things, about the Chief Good, or about the Nature of the Soul, they would have heard them with great Patience and Delight. Nothing but deep and subtle Speculations, about these kind of Arguments, did relish with them and please their Palates. But the History of our Saviour, his Life, and Death, and Resurrection, and the plain Precepts of his Doctrine, were dry and insipid things to them, and were so far from having a shew of Wisdom and Philosophy, that they appeared foolish and ridiculous to them.

But the design of God in the Christian Religion, being not to please the humour, and gratifie the curiosity of men, but really to do them good, and to reform the Manners of Mankind, he us'd quite another method ; which
how

how offensive soever it might be to those who thought themselves wise, yet it was really the wisest and most powerful means to that end. So the Apostle tells us here in the Text, *But we preach Christ Crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness: but unto them that are called, that is, to those whose minds are duly prepared to consider things impartially, and to receive the Truth, the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God; a most wise and powerful means to reform the World, an eminent instance of the Divine Power and Wisdom.*

In these words we have these *two* things considerable.

First, The Exception which the world took at the Doctrine of the Gospel, upon account of our Saviour's sufferings. Christ Crucified was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.

Secondly, That notwithstanding the seeming unreasonableness and absurdity of it, it was a most wise and effectual Contrivance for the End to which

which it was designed and appointed.
 Vol. 10. But unto them which are called, both
*Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of
 God, and the wisdom of God.* I shall
 speak something to each of these, as
 briefly and plainly as I can. I begin
 with the

*First, The Exception which the
 World took at the Doctrine of the
 Gospel, upon account of our Saviour's
 Sufferings. The World were generally
 offended at it, but not all upon the
 same account; the Jews took one kind
 of exception against it, and the Hea-
 then another. We Preach Christ cruci-
 fied, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and
 unto the Greeks foolishness. They were
 both offended at the same thing, the
 low and suffering condition of our
 Saviour; but not upon the same rea-
 son. The Jews thought, that this mean
 appearance and condition of our Savi-
 our, was unsuitable to the Power of
 God; and the Heathen, that it was not
 agreeable to the Wisdom of men.*

The Jews from the Tradition of
 their Fathers, to which (just as the
 Church of Rome does now a-days)
 they

they paid a greater reverence, than to the written Word of God, were possess'd with a strong perswasion, that the *Messias* whom they expected, and was foretold by the Prophets, was to be a Great Temporal Prince, to appear in great Splendor and Glory, to be a mighty Conqueror, and not only to free them from the *Roman* yoke, which they were then under, but to subdue all Nations to them, and so bring them under *their* Dominion and Government. And this did so generally prevail among them, that even the Disciples of our Saviour were as strongly possess'd with this conceit, as any of the rest; insomuch that the Mother of *James* and *John* made it her solemn request to our Saviour, that *Her two Sons might sit, one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his Kingdom.* And tho' he had told his Disciples just before, that *he must go up to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the Scribes and Pharisees, and be betrayed and put to Death;* yet the other conceit of his Temporal Dominion and Greatness did so possess their Minds, that they could not under-

Vol. 10. *derstand this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not, as St. Luke tells us, Luke 9. 45. Nay, even after his Death and Resurrection, when he appeared to them, this still stuck in their Minds, as appears by that question which they askt him immediately before his ascension, Acts 1. 6. When they were come together, they askt of him, Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel? They took it for granted, the Messias would do it one time or other, and they enquire of him, whether that were the time.*

So that the *Jews* being so firmly fixt in this Conceit of the Temporal Reign of the *Messias*, nothing could be a greater stumbling-block to them, than the mean and suffering Condition, in which our Saviour appeared. The meanness of his Birth and Life was a great Objection against him; but when they saw him put to Death so ignominiously, and that he did not then shew his Glory and Power, to save himself from that

that cruel and shameful Death, they could rather believe any thing than that this was the *Messias* foretold, and whom they had so long expected. They made full account, that the *Messias*, when ever he came, would live in great Splendor and Glory, and do great things for the Advantage and Honour of their Nation; the least they expected from him, was their deliverance from the *Roman* Yoke, and the establishing of the Throne of *David* for ever; or if his beginning had been obscure, that he would at last break forth in great Lustre and Majesty; or, if they could have supposed that the *Messias* should be persecuted, and condemned, and nailed to the Cross, yet they doubted not, but then God would have given Testimony to him by some sign from Heaven, and have rescued him from the Cross in a miraculous manner: But seeing nothing of all this, nothing but Poverty and Meanness, Reproach and Suffering attending him, they concluded, whatever Miracles he pretended to, this could not be the Son of God, the true *Messias*.

Serm. 4.

On

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On the other side, the Heathen Philosophers, who were not possess'd with these conceits about the *Messias*, they were offended at the unreasonableness and folly, as they thought, of the Apostles Doctrine, who went about to perswade the World, that a Man who had lately suffered, and was Crucified at *Jernsalem*, was a great Prophet come into the World; nay the Son of God, in whom all men ought to believe, and by whom they ought to hope for life and Salvation; as if it were reasonable to think, that God would have expos'd the most Innocent and Virtuous Person that ever was, to so great Reproach and Sufferings, that the Son of God should die, and that Life and Immortality were to be hoped for from him, who was Crucified and put to Death. This they looked upon as a story so ill framed, that to all wise and sagacious men, it destroyed its own credit and belief. For tho' they said he was risen again from the dead, yet before that could be entertained by men of Philosophical minds, there were many deep points to be determined, as concerning the Nature of the Soul,

Soul, and whether it can subsist separately from the Body, and whether a Body once dead can be restored to life again, and reunited to the Soul?

Sermon 47

And as for his Doctrine, which the Apostles pretended to deliver, it was a plain and rude thing, without Art or Eloquence; nothing of deep Speculation, or strict demonstration in it; in short, so far from being worthy of a teacher come from God, that it was below the pitch of an ordinary Philosopher. These and such like things, were in all probability, the Exceptions which the Heathen Philosophers took at the Apostles Preaching, concerning our Saviour's death, and his Doctrine; and they had some colour in them.

But upon impartial examination, it will appear, that notwithstanding these exceptions, the Sufferings of our Saviour considered with all the circumstances that belong to them, were a very wise and effectual method made use of by Almighty God, for the re-

forming

forming and saving of the World.
Vol. 10. Which brings me to the

Second thing I propounded to speak to from these words, namely, to vindicate the Wisdom of this Design and Contrivance of Almighty God, for the Salvation of Mankind, by the Sufferings of his Son, from the seeming absurdity and unreasonableness of it. *But unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the Wisdom of God.* And,

First, The Jews had no sufficient ground, to be so much offended at the sufferings of the *Messias*. For,

I. They had no reason to expect that the *Messias* should be a great temporal Prince, if they had attended to the Predictions of their Prophets concerning him, which ought to have been their Rule: for they affirm no such thing of him. All that they say of him plainly refers to a spiritual Kingdom, that he should rule in Righteousness, that he should preach the Gospel to the Poor, and open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the

the deaf, and make the lame walk; that he should finish transgression, and make an end of sin, and make intercession for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness. So that if they had not entertained a very groundless and carnal conceit concerning him, they could not so widely have mistaken the ancient Prophecies of him, which ought to have guided them in these matters, and which they might have seen all plainly fulfilled in the Person of our Saviour.

II. The Predictions concerning him do most expressly foretel his Death and Sufferings, and that with very particular Circumstances: *David* in the 22d Psalm. *Isaiab* quite throughout his 53d Chap. And *Daniel* does particularly point out the time when he should be cut off. So that they had all the reason in the world to expect that the *Messias*, when he came, should be *despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief, that he should be scourged and buffeted, oppressed and afflicted, and at last cut off out of the land of the living.* Nay, if it had

Vol. 10. been otherwise, they had had no reason to have owned him for the true *Messias*.

III. As for signs to evidence him to be the Son of God; tho' God did not gratifie their curiosity as to the nature and manner of them, yet he gave the greatest testimonies that ever were given to any Prophet, and abundantly enough to satisfy any reasonable Man, that he was *a teacher come from God*. Indeed his Miracles were not generally so prodigious and amazing: but they were many and publick; they were useful and beneficial to mankind; and for that reason, more likely to come from God. He did not call for fire from Heaven to destroy his Enemies: but he gave Sight to the Blind, and Hearing to the Deaf, and Health to those that were sick of the most Dangerous and Inveterate Diseases, and (which was always reckon'd among the greatest and most undoubted kind of Miracles) Life to the Dead. And when he himself was put to death by the malice of the *Jews*, tho' he did not *come down from the Cross*, and was not rescued

rescued from his Sufferings by an immediate hand from Heaven, to triumph over the Malice and Cruelty which they were exercising upon him, (which was the Miracle they required to be shown) yet God was not wanting to give Testimony to him in a most remarkable manner, by Prodigies which immediately followed his Death; in the strange darkness which came upon the Land; in the terrible Earthquake which rent the Vail of the Temple, and tore the Rocks asunder; in the opening of the Graves, and the rising of the Dead; and *lastly*, in his own miraculous Resurrection, the third day after he was Crucified; so that here was no sign wanting in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, to convince their obstinacy and unbelief, unless it were that very sign which they demanded. God did enough to satisfy every Man's Reason; and he is not wont to gratify the Honour and Curiosity of men. If men be so unreasonable as to expect this from him, God lets such men continue in their wilful blindness and infidelity.

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Secondly,

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Secondly, Neither had the heathen Philosophers reason, upon account of the Story of our Saviour's Sufferings, to look upon the Gospel as so absurd and unreasonable a thing; as will I hope evidently appear, if you will be pleased to consider with me these following particulars.

I. That there is nothing more inculcated in the Writings of the wisest and most famous of the heathen Philosophers than this, That worldly Greatness and Prosperity is not to be admired, but despised by a truly wise Man. *Aristotle* in his *Ethicks* makes it the property of a magnanimous and great spirit, not to admire greatness, and power, and victory, and riches. So that according to their own Principles, our Saviour was not to be despised upon account of his Meanness and Sufferings. He might be a great Prophet, and come from God, tho' he enjoyed nothing of worldly Greatness and Prosperity.

II. They

II. They tell us likewise, that men may be very Virtuous and Good, and dearly beloved of God, and yet be liable to great Miseries and Sufferings. And to this purpose I could bring yon almost innumerable Testimonies out of the Books of the Philosophers. *Max. Tyrius* the Platonist, speaking of *Ulysses*, says, That the Gods forced him to wander and beg and wear rags, and suffered him to be reproached and reviled, for the love and friendship that they bare to him. *Epictetus*, a poor Slave, but inferior to none of all the Philosophers, for true Virtue and Wisdom, thanks the Gods for his mean Condition, and says, He did not believe himself to be one jot the less beloved by them, for that reason; and that he was not cast into a State of Poverty and Contempt, because the Gods hated him, but that he might be fit to be a witness to others.

III. They tell us likewise, That a State of Affliction and Suffering is so far from rendring a Man unfit to reform the World, and to be an Ex-
 I 4 ample

ample of Virtue, that none so fit as
 Vol. 10. those that are in such Circumstances. Arrian in his Dissertations of Epictetus, describing a Man fit to reform the World, whom he calls, the Apostle and Messenger, the Minister and Preacher of God to Mankind, gives this Character of him. He must, says he, be without house and harbour, and destitute of all worldly accommodations; (just as it is said of our Saviour, that the Son of man had not where to lay his head;) he must be armed with such a patience by the greatest Sufferings, as if he were a stone and devoid of Sense; he must be a spectacle of Misery and Contempt to the World. And to mention no more, Plato in the second Book of his Common-Wealth, when he would represent a righteous man, giving the most unquestionable Testimony to the World of his Virtue, Let him, says he, be stript of all things in this World, except his righteousness; let him be poor and diseased, and accounted a wicked and unjust man; let him be whipt and tormented and Crucified as a Malefactor; and yet all this while retain his integrity; which

does

does so exactly agree with our Saviour's Condition, that had he not wrote before his time, one would have thought he had alluded to it.

Serm. 4.

IV. As it seems very convenient, (I am not so bold as to say it was necessary, and that God had no other way to bring about the Salvation of men; for what are we that we should prescribe to God, and set bounds to infinite Wisdom?) I say, as it seems very reasonable, that in order to our Salvation, the Son of God, who was to be the Author of it, should become man, both that he might be an Example of Holiness, and an Expiation for Sin; and that he should be born after the manner of other men, to satisfy us, that he was really of the same Nature with us, that so he might converse more familiarly with us, and might be a more easie and encouraging and imitable Example of all Holiness and Virtue; so likewise was it convenient that he should be subject to the Miseries and Sufferings of our Nature, that by passing through the several States and Conditions

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ditions of Humanity, he might have an Experimental knowledge of the Sufferings that Humane Nature is liable to; and from his own Sense of our infirmities might be a more *Merciful and Compassionate High Priest*. And this the Apostle expressly takes notice of, *Heb. 5.* That it was convenient that *our High Priest should be taken from among men*, that he might learn to be *compassionate*, by knowing Experimentally what it was to be *tempted and afflicted*; the knowledge of Experience being the strongest Motive and Incitement to Pity; and consequently to give us the greater assurance of his tender Affection to us.

It was of great use, that he should live in so mean and afflicted a Condition, to confound the Pride and Vanity and Fantastry of the World, and to convince men of these *two* great Truths, that God may love those whom he afflicts, and that men may be Innocent and Virtuous and contented, in the midst of Poverty and Reproach and Suffering. Had our blessed Saviour been a great world-

ly Prince; his Influence and Example might possibly have made more Hypocrites and servile Converts, but it would not have tended one whit to make men more inwardly Good and Virtuous. The great Arguments that must do this, must be fetched, not from the Pomp and Prosperity of *this* World, but from the Happiness and Misery of the *other*. Besides, had our Saviour appeared in any great Power and Splendor, the Christian Religion could not have so clearly been acquitted from the suspicion of a worldly Interest and Design.

Serm. 4.

And then the Scripture assigns very plain and excellent Reasons of his suffering of Death, that he might make expiation for the Sins of the whole World, that he might take away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself, and put an end to that troublesome and unreasonable way of Worship by Sacrifice, which was in use both among Jews and Heathens, and that by Conquering death, and him that had the power of it, he might deliver those, who through fear of Death, were all their

*their life time subject to Bondage,* as  
 Vpl. 10. the Apostle speaks, *Heb. 2. 14.* For  
 tho' the Death of Christ barely con-  
 sider'd in it self, be far from an En-  
 couragement to us to hope for Im-  
 mortality; yet the Death of Christ,  
 considered together with his Re-  
 surrection from the Dead, and his  
 Ascension into Heaven, is the clear-  
 est, and most sensible, and most po-  
 pular Demonstration that ever was  
 in the World, of another Life after  
 this, and a blessed Immortality. So  
 that considering our Saviour rose  
 from the Dead, it is far from be-  
 ing ridiculous, to rely upon one that  
 died, for our hopes of Immorta-  
 lity.

V. As for the plainness of our  
 Saviour's Doctrine, and of the In-  
 struments whereby it was propaga-  
 ted, this is so far from being an  
 Objection against it, that it is the  
 great Commendation of it. It con-  
 tains a plain Narrative of our Savi-  
 our's Life and Miracles, and Death  
 and Resurrection and Ascension into  
 Heaven, and a few plain Precepts  
 of Life; but the most excellent and  
 reason-



reasonable, and the freest from all vanity and folly, that are to be met with in any Book in the World. And can any thing be more worthy of God, or more likely to proceed from him, than so plain and useful a Doctrine as this? Law-givers do not use to deliver their Laws in eloquent Language, to set them off with flourish of speech, and to perswade men to a liking of them by subtil and artificial insinuations; but plainly and in few words to declare their will and pleasure.

And for the instruments God was pleased to make use of for the publishing of this Doctrine, we grant they were generally rude and unlearned men, and our Religion hath no reason to be ashamed of it; for this was very agreeable to the simplicity of the whole design, that all things should be managed in the plainest manner; that Christianity might be introduced in such a way, as there might be no possible suspicion of a human contrivance, or worldly design in it. The Religion it self was simple and plain, there were no worldly

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ly inducements to the embracing of it, but all imaginable discouragements upon that account; the instruments of propagating it were simple and plain men, unassisted by Learning or Art, by secular Power and Authority; which is so far from being a disparagement to our Religion, that it is a great Reputation to it, and a plain evidence of its Divine Original, that it was from God, and was countenanced and carried on by him, *not by might nor by power, but by the spirit of the Lord.*

And in truth considering the Nature of this Doctrine, which consisted either of plain matter of fact, or of easie and familiar Precepts and Rules for a good life, the Apostles were as fit for the propagating of it, as any sort of Persons in the World: for it did not require depth of understanding, or sharpness of wit to comprehend it, and declare it to others; but honesty and integrity of mind, zeal and industry to promote it; in which qualities the Apostles excell'd the Philosophers, and best Learned Persons in the World; and provided

provided an instrument be sufficient and competent for its end, it matters *Serm. 4.* not how plain and unpolisht it be; for instruments are not intended for Ornaments, but for use. Now the Apostles of our Saviour, tho' they were illiterate and unbred, were as competent Witnesses of matter of fact, as any other Persons: for there is no Wit and Learning required, to relate what a Man hath seen and heard. Nay the more simple and plain, the less Eloquent and Artificial any relation is, the more likely it is to be true, and to gain belief.

Thus you see that notwithstanding the seeming unreasonableness and absurdity of the Doctrine of the Gospel, it is a most wise and effectual contrivance for the reforming and saving of Mankind. But *unto them that are called, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ the power of God, and the Wisdom of God.*

The proper Inference from all this is, to stir us up to a thankful acknowledgment and admiration of the Wisdom and Goodness of God, in the Salvation

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Vol. 10. Salvation of men by *Jesus Christ*.

We are most apt to admire that Wisdom which finds out such means to an end, as human Wisdom would have been least apt to devise and hit upon; and yet the more we consider them, the more we must approve their fitness. Such is the design of the recovery and redemption of Mankind, by the Death and Sufferings of the Son of God. However it may appear to rash and inconsiderate men, who judge superficially, and according to the uppermost appearances of things, to be a very unlikely and improbable design; yet upon a thorough and impartial examination of things, we shall find, that God's way is the wisest, and that in the management of this design, he hath outdone the utmost Prudence and Wisdom of men, and hath ordered things to infinitely more advantage than they would have been, in any of those methods which the short and imperfect Wisdom of carnal men would have been most apt to pitch upon. Ignorant, and conceited, and prejudiced men, may censure it for folly: but the Angels, more intelligent and

to be admir'd and ador'd.

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and discerning Creatures than we are, and of a deeper reach, do look upon *Serm. 4* with wonder and astonishment. So the Apostle tells us, 1 Pet. i. 12. where speaking of the Gospel, he calls it a thing *which the Angels desire to look into*. An allusion to the *Cherubims*, who looked earnestly upon the Mercy Seat which was over the Ark, as if they would pry into it.

And then let us acknowledge the infinite Goodness of God, in saving us by the Death and Sufferings of his Son, us vile and miserable Sinners. Had we been the most innocent and righteous, and the dearest Friends to him in the World, what could he have done more? How could he possibly have testified greater Love to us, than to give his Son to die for us? Here is Goodness without bounds, love without parallel and example; for greater love than this hath no man, that a man should lay down his life for his friend. This is the highest pitch that human affection ever attained to, to die for one's Friend: *But herein hath God commended his love to us, that while*

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we

we were enemies, he gave his son to die
 Vol. 10 *for us.*

This is that which we are to commemorate at this Season, and by the commemoration thereof, to prepare our selves for the receiving of the blessed Sacrament of his Body and Blood, which was broken and shed for us. The consideration whereof, as it should excite in us a hearty Sorrow and Repentance for sin, so should it also inflame us with love to Christ, who by suffering such things for us, hath laid upon us an eternal obligation of Love and Obedience to him. The remembrance of whose Death should not only put us into a present fit and passion of grief and love, but should be the ground of lasting affections and resolutions; the thoughts of what he hath done and suffered for us, should make us ambitious to do or suffer any thing for him. What should not we be willing to part with for him, who did not think his own life, and his glory dear to him for our sakes? Did he die for us? and shall we think much to live to him? Did he become miserable

to be admir'd and ador'd.

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miserable, for our sakes? and shall we think much to become holy and happy for his sake and for our own? Serm. 5.

Such affections and holy resolutions, the consideration of our Saviour's Death and Sufferings should be apt to excite in us. What grief, what love, what thankfulness should the remembrance of his dying love work in us! When we consider seriously the many and the mighty Blessings and Benefits which flow to us out of his wounds, and are taking the cup of Salvation into our hands, how should our Souls and all that is within us, bless his his holy name, who pardoneth our iniquities, and healeth all our Diseases, who redeemed our life from destruction, and crowneth us with loving kindness and tender mercy. To him therefore, our gracious and good God, let us give all Thanks, Adoration and Praise, Amen.

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to be admired and which
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miserable for our sake, and shall we
think much to become holy and hap-
py for his sake and for our own?

Such affections and holy resolutions
are the foundation of our salvation. And
if suffering should be expected in
this world, what love what thank-
fulness should the remembrance of his
love work in us! When we con-
sider how he has loved the many and the might-
y, how he has blessed us with his
out of his wounds, and are taking
up of salvation into our hands, how
could our souls and all our members
not be his holy temple, and our
our ministers, and his will be done in
us who redeemed our souls from all
iniquity and counted us with loving kind-
ness and tender mercy. To him there-
fore our gratitude and good God, let us
all thank, glorify and praise.

SE 11

SERMON V.

The Evidence of our Saviour's
Resurrection.

ACTS I. 3.

To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

THESE words comprehend in short the whole Evidence of our Saviour's Resurrection, which may be referr'd to these four Heads.

K 3

First,

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First, His Appearance to them after his Death and Passion. To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion. To whom; that is, to the Apostles, whom St. Luke had mentioned just before. After he had given Commandment to the Apostles, whom he had chosen; To whom also, &c.

Secondly, The Proof of the Reality of his Appearance. To whom also he shewed himself alive after his Passion, by many infallible proofs, εν πολλοις τεκμηριοις, idque compluribus argumentis, saith Erasmus, and that by many certain and undoubted proofs, or arguments.

Thirdly, The Duration and Continuance of his Appearance to them. Being seen of them forty days.

Fourthly, The Subject Matter of his Discourse with them. And speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. Each of these affords us a considerable Evidence of Christ's Resurrection.

First

First, His Appearance to them after his Death and Passion. To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion. In which words, there are three things very considerable, and which give great Evidence to our Saviour's Resurrection.

I. His Appearance to his Apostles.

II. That he was really alive, and his Body vitally united to his Soul.

III. And this after he was really Dead, *after his passion*; that is, after he was crucified, dead, and buried, he was raised to life again. I shall speak briefly of these.

I. His Appearance to his Apostles. *To whom also he shewed himself alive.*

The Apostles are here only mentioned, because this is here spoken of, in order to their Designation and Appointment to be the Witnesses of Christ's Resurrection to the World, as the great Confirmation of that Doctrine which they were to publish: but be-

cause I am considering his Appearance after his Resurrection, as an Evidence of the truth of it, I shall therefore take in his Appearance to others also, of his Disciples and Followers and consider likewise, why he only appeared to his own Followers, and not also to the unbelieving *Jews*, who had put him to Death, for the full Conviction of his Enemies and Murderers, and the Conversion of that whole Nation, to whom he was primarily sent.

In considering his several Appearances, not only to his Apostles, but to his other Disciples and Followers, that I may give the shortest and fullest view of them, I shall take them as they are briefly sum'd up by St. Paul, 1 Cor. 15. 4, &c. where giving an account of the Sum of his Doctrine among the *Corinthians*, he tells us, that the foundation of all his Preaching was the Death and Resurrection of Christ: *I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried,*

ried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. And then *Serm. 5.*

follows the particular Evidence of his Resurrection, *ver. 5. And that he was seen of Cephas. St. Paul* here takes no notice of his first Appearance to the devout Women, who brought Spices and Ointments to his Sepulchre, *Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the Mother of James, and other women,* as we find *Luke 24. 10.* The reason of which seems to be this, because his first Appearance was in consideration of their Piety and Affection to him, and of the weakness of their Sex, their Faith being liable to be first staggered; and they were only to relate it to the Apostles, and to be honoured with carrying the first news of it, not to be Witnesses of it to the World; so that this Appearance was only for the private confirmation of their Faith, and therefore not particularly taken notice of by *St. Paul* among the publick Evidences of Christ's Resurrection.

He was seen of Cephas. This is mention'd Luke 24. 34. The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

St.

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St. Paul goes on; and then of the *twelve*. The College of the Apostles, because their number was twelve by our Saviour's institution, are most frequently called *the twelve*, tho' at some meetings some one of them might perhaps be absent: 'Tis true there was a short interruption by the miscarriage of *Judas*, from the time of our Saviour's Apprehension to his Ascension, and then they are called *the eleven*, as before and after they are called *the twelve*; yea at this first Appearance of our Saviour to them, when they were but *ten*, *Thomas* being absent, they are called *the eleven*, Mark 16. 14. He appeared to *the eleven*, as they sat at *meat*; because they were then but *eleven* in all. And indeed in this Text of St. Paul, both the vulgar Translation, which certainly follows a very ancient Copy, and St. Ambrose there instead of *twelve*, render it *eleven*; so that St. Paul probably means our Saviour's first Appearance to them, mentioned by St. Mark, where they are also called *the eleven*, tho' *Thomas* was absent; which is the reason why St. Paul says afterwards, at
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the seventh verse, that he was seen of all the Apostles, that is, *Thomas* also being present, as I shall shew by and by. Serm. 5.

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once. This was the most solemn Appearance of all, mentioned *Mat. 28. 10.* and *John 21. 1.* where our Saviour appointed a general meeting of all his Disciples and Followers. Go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me. *Ver. 16.* They went into Galilee, into a Mountain, where Jesus had appointed them. This Mountain, according to the ancient Tradition, was Mount *Thabor*.

There is one considerable difficulty concerning the greatness of this number of five hundred; namely, that after our Saviour's Ascension, we find, *Acts 1. 15.* that after their return from Mount *Olivet*, (from whence our Saviour ascended,) to *Jerusalem*, the whole number of their meeting was but an hundred and twenty, for so it is expressly said, The number of the names together, were about an hundred and twenty.

ty, that is, of the Persons there met.
 Vol. 10. Now we cannot reasonably suppose, that any of those *five hundred*, who had seen him after his Resurrection, were fallen off from them.

For the clear solution of this, it is to be consider'd, that the great meeting of *five hundred* was in *Galilee*, where our Saviour's residence chiefly had been, and where he had preached most constantly, and by consequence he had probably there the greatest number of Followers, which was the reason why he chose to appear there, and appointed that place for the general meeting. After which the Apostles, who went thither by our Lord's appointment, together with others who accompanied them from *Jerusalem*, returned back: but his Followers who lived in *Galilee* remained there; so that there might very well be *five hundred* at the meeting in *Galilee*, and but *an hundred and twenty* at *Jerusalem*.

St. Paul goes on, *ver. 7. After that he was seen of James.* This particular Appearance of our Lord to St. James, the

the Brother of our Lord, is no where mentioned in the Evangelists. St. Paul probably had it from the common Tradition mention'd by St. Jerome, out of the *Hebrew Gospel* of the *Nazarenes*, in which are several Passages omitted by St. Matthew, and this for one, "That our Lord immediately after he had risen, went and appeared to James; for James had vowed that hour that he drank of the Cup of the Lord, (*viz.* in the Sacrament,) he would not eat Bread, till he saw him risen from the dead. The Lord, when he appeared to him, said, bring hither Bread and a Table, and he took the Bread and blessed, and brake it, and gave it to James the just, and said to him, My Brother, eat thy Bread; for the Son of Man is Risen from among them that sleep. To this Tradition St. Paul probably alludes; but then *emita*, which we translate afterwards or then, ought to be render'd, as it elsewhere is, *præterea*, besides, moreover he appeared to James, without denoting the order of the time; for according to this Tradition, it was presently after his Resurrection, before he

he had appeared to the other Apostles.

It follows, *Then he was seen of all the Apostles; that is, by Thomas, as well as the rest.* And this was his second Appearance to the Apostles together; of which St. Luke gives us an account, *Luke 24. 5. and St. John Ch. 20. 19.*

And last of all, he was, says St. Paul, seen of me also, as an abortive, or one born out of due time. This he speaks of the Appearance of our Lord to him, in his way to *Damascus*, whereby he was in a very powerful and extraordinary manner on a sudden converted to Christianity.

Thus I have given you an account of the several Appearances of our Saviour, not only to the Apostles, but to others, and have endeavoured to explain the chief difficulties relating to them; so that here is a very plentiful testimony of our Saviour's Appearance after his Resurrection. I proceed to the

II. Thing

after he had been really dead.

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II. Thing here observable, that our Lord was really alive when he thus appeared, and his Body vitally united to his Soul. *To whom also he showed himself alive.* To which purpose, there is a remarkable passage in *Ignostus*, in his Epistle to the Church of *Smyrna*, out of the same *Hebrew Newerene Gospel*, "That Christ said to Peter" "after his Resurrection, Behold, touch me and see that I am not a Spirit" "that have assumed a Body. For that was one great objection, that his Body was not a real Body united to his Soul, but a thin airy body, such as are assumed by Spectres and Apparitions. But the farther Evidence of this, I refer to the second general Head, concerning the Proofs of the Reality of his Appearance. I proceed to the

III. Thing I observed, viz. That he appeared alive after he had been really Dead. *To whom also he showed himself alive, after his passion,* says the Text; that is, after he was crucified, and dead, and buried, he was raised and restored to life again. And this likewise

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likewise is necessary, to evidence the Truth and Reality of his Resurrection, that he was really Dead. That this was so we cannot doubt, whether we consider the malice of the *Jews*, who would take care he should be dead before he was taken from the Cross; or the manner of his Death, his Heart being pierced by the Spear, which was evident from the Water and Blood which came out of his side, which shewed that his Heart was mortally wounded; or the time of his being in the Grave, which was part of three days.

And now if he was really dead, his Restitution to life, which we call his Resurrection, must be miraculous; it being beyond any natural Power, that we know of, to effect it.

As for that malicious Tradition of the *Jews*, that he was stolen out of his Grave by his Disciples, while the watch was asleep, and given out to be risen from the dead; besides the undeniable proofs of his Resurrection, which I shall produce by and by, the Evidence which these suborn'd Witnesses



nesses gave of his Disciples stealing away his Body, destroys it self; for they said, *His Disciples came by night, and stole him away, while we slept*; which amounts to no more, but that when they awaked his Body was some way or other conveyed or gone out of the Grave; which is consistent with his Resurrection. But surely none will think fit to give Credit to what they testifie was done while they were asleep. They are very willing to believe a thing, who will admit of such a Deposition.

Thus much concerning our Saviour's appearance to his Disciples and Followers, after his Resurrection. I shall briefly consider in the

*Second* place, why he only appeared to his own Followers, and not also to the unbelieving *Jews* who had put him to Death, for the full Conviction of his Enemies and Murderers, and the Conversion of that whole Nation to whom he was primarily sent.

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Of this matter, so far as is fit for us to enquire into the Reason of the Divine Dispensations, this probable account may be given.

1. It was only of absolute necessity, that those who were to be the first Publishers of the Gospel, and the Witnesses of his Resurrection to the World, should have the utmost Evidence and Satisfaction concerning the reality of it. Others might very soon credit it upon the Testimony of so many Witnesses, who also gave Evidence to the Truth of their Testimony, by the Miracles which they wrought; and of their own sincerity, by dying for this Testimony. And thus St. Peter takes notice of the Reason why our Lord, after his Resurrection, did not appear to all the People, but only to select Witnesses; because his appearance was necessary only to those, who were designed and appointed to be the Witnesses of it. If more had been necessary, he must by the same Reason have appeared to all the World, as well as to the *Jews*. *Acts* 10. 40, 41.

Him

to his Disciples only.

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Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but to Witnesses chosen before of God, even unto us, who did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the Dead; and he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify, &c.

Serm. 3.

2. The unbelieving Jews, especially the chief Priests and Rulers, upon whose Authority the People depended, were very unworthy to whom God should afford so extraordinary a way of Conviction, who had already despised and rejected so great Evidence as was offered to them, and not only so, but maliciously imputed the plainest Miracles that ever were wrought amongst them, to the Power and Operation of the Devil. Now if any thing can render men incapable of the favour of farther means of Conviction, such malicious resistance of the Evidence which our Saviour's Miracles daily wrought among them, carried along with them, would probably do it; especially if we consider, that the greatest of all the Miracles which he wrought in his Life time (I mean

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Vol. 10. the raising of *Lazarus* from the dead, after he had been dead four days) was so far from convincing them, tho' they could not deny the thing, that from thence their malice took occasion to resolve to put him to death, *John 11. 47. Then gathered the chief Priests and Pharisees a Council, and said, What do we? For this man doth many miracles. If we let him alone, all men will believe on him. And Ver. 53. Therefore from that day they took counsel together for to put him to death.* Now was it reasonable, that he should appear to them for their conviction, after he was risen from the dead, who maliciously conspired to compass his death, for this very cause, because they knew that he had raised one from the dead.

3. This would have been inconsistent with that just punishment, which God had determined to bring upon the *Jewish* Nation for their obstinate infidelity, and malicious rejection, and cruel usage of the Son of God. After fitting means used for the conviction of men, it is just with God to let them remain in their own obstinate infidelity, and to punish them for it. An



it is not to be expected, that God should use violent and irresistible means, to bring such Persons to Repentance, and to prevent their ruin. He pities the weakness and infirmities of honest minds, and condescends to give them such evidence as it is not reasonable to demand, as he did to his Disciples: but he hath not thought fit to provide so extraordinary a remedy for wilful and obstinate infidelity; which was the case of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Secondly, We will consider the Proofs of the Reality of our Saviour's Appearance after his Resurrection. *To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις, by many certain and undoubted proofs or arguments, for so the words properly signifie, as Quintilian from Aristotle tells us; τεκμηρία, says he, are indubitata & necessaria signa, undoubted and necessary signs of a thing, as the actions of speaking, walking, eating and drinking, are the τεκμηρία, undoubted signs of life.*

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And these *received* or *undoubted* proofs of our Saviour's Resurrection, may be referr'd to these *two* heads, the natural, and the supernatural and Miraculous evidences of the thing.

I. The Natural Evidence of the thing to their senses; to their eyes, the quickest and surest of senses, men being least apt to be deceived in those things, *quæ sunt oculis commissa fidelibus, which are committed to such faithful witnesses, as our own eyes.* He was seen of all his Disciples, not once, but several times; not by a transient view and glance, but in a way of the most familiar Conversation; he discoursed with them, and did eat and drink with them, and with the same Circumstances that he used in his life-time, he gave thanks, and brake Bread with them; he suffered his Body to be touched by them, that they might be convinced that it was a real Body, consisting of flesh and bones, *Luke 24. 39. Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*

And

And to convince them beyond all doubt and scruple, that the very same Body was raised in which he had suffer'd, he gives them leave to handle the Wounds of his Hands and Feet, Luke 24. 39. *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I my self.* John 20. 19. *He shewed them his hands and his side.* And to Thomas, who was more unbelieving than the rest, he says in the presence of them all, ver. 27. *Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing.* But besides this natural sensible evidence, he gave them likewise,

2. A supernatural and miraculous Evidence. St. John mentions *two* or *three* instances; his coming on the sudden upon them, and *standing in the midst of them, when the doors were shut.* Not that he past through the Door with his Body, which is not a Miracle, but a plain Impossibility, and therefore just as fit to countenance *Transubstantiation*, as one impossibility is to prove another: but that he did

Vol. 10. miraculously open the door, and come in upon them so quickly, as was undiscernible to them; which every Man will grant, not only to be possible, but easie to the Divine Power. But this way of our Saviour's conveying himself into the midst of his Disciples, tho' it be also miraculous, yet the Church of *Rome* will by no means allow it; it is too plain, and easie to be reconciled with the nature and possibility of things; they love at their Hearts a *lying Wonder*, a foppish Miracle.

And this Miracle was repeated twice; first when *Thomas* was absent; *John* 20. 19. And when he was present, the same was done again, ver. 26.

And then the Miraculous draught of Fishes, by which also he had made himself known to them in his lifetime.

And then *Peter's* casting himself into the Sea, when he knew it was he, in confidence of that Divine Power,



Power, which in the like kind he had experience of before, *Serm. 5.*

These Miracles St. John mentions, but he tells us, Chap. 20. 30. that *many other miracles Jesus did in the presence of his Disciples, which are not set down in that Book.* The

*Third Thing* in the Text is the duration and continuance of his Appearing to them, *being seen of them forty days.* And this is of great moment to confirm the reality of the thing. A Man may for once be imposed upon by an illusion of fancy, in a thing which he vehemently desires and expects, and which runs strongly in his mind: but where there is time to examine things, and compare all circumstances together, and to look narrowly into them, and to try them by several senses, and at several times for so long a space, it is morally, nay almost naturally impossible, that any one Man in his senses, much more so many hundreds of Persons, should in such Circumstances be grossly deluded, in a plain sensible matter of fact.

*Fourthly*

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*Fourthly and lastly; Here is the subject matter of our Saviour's Discourse with his Disciples, concerning things which pertain to the Kingdom of God; or as it is in the Verse before, after he had by the holy Ghost, (which was not given him by measure, as the Evangelist tells us elsewhere) given commandment to his Apostles, whom he had chosen. That is, after he had given the full orders and instructions concerning the Doctrine which they were to publish, and all other things pertaining to that Spiritual Kingdom which he was setting up in the World; by the agreement of all which, with what he had said to them in his life-time, they were more and more confirmed, that it was the very same Person whom they had converted with before, for above three years together. And yet in this Discourse concerning his Kingdom, he reserved some things to be afterward revealed to them by the Holy Ghost, according as he had promised, that when the spirit of truth was come, he should teach them all things, particularly concerning the spiritual nature of his Kingdom, which they did*

did not yet fully understand, as appears by that question which they put to him, *ver. 6. Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom unto Israel?* They still dreamed of a Temporal Kingdom, in which our Saviour would appear in great pomp and splendor, to subdue the World to them.

From all this Discourse which I have made, you see what Evidence the Apostles, who were to be the first Publishers of the Gospel, and Witnesses of Christ's Resurrection, had of the Truth and Reality of it; so plentiful and clear and convincing, as nothing more could either be desired or expected. And we have a credible relation of these things brought down to us, abundantly, sufficient to satisfy those who are free from the bias of Passion or Interest, or the Prejudice and Prepossession of a contrary Religion, in which they have been educated and brought up; and sufficient to gain some few ingenious and teachable Persons here and there, who do more impartially consider things, and tho' they have been educated in a contrary Religion, yet have preserved in them-

Vol. 10. themselves a greater freedom of judgment, than Education does usually leave in the minds of men.

But yet this credible relation of Actions and Miracles done long ago, how true soever in it self, does not carry so present, and sensible, and strong a Conviction with it, as to be able to bear down in the common People, the violent prejudice of Education in a contrary Religion, and consequently is not likely to do any great matter of it self toward the conversion of Infidel Nations.

And therefore the Divine Wisdom, which does nothing that is superfluous and unnecessary, thought fit not only to send the Apostles armed with this Evidence, which had abundantly convinced them, to testify the Resurrection of Christ to the World, but also to give an immediate testimony to them, by enabling them to work present Miracles upon the spot, for the confirmation of their testimony. And this Divine Power which went along with them, was a sensible



sensible Testimony and Conviction *Serm. 5.*  
both to the knowing and ignorant  
part of Mankind, that they were  
Teachers and Witnesses sent by God;  
and therefore our Lord commands  
them, *not to depart from Jerusalem,*  
*till they had received power from on*  
*high,* to qualifie them to be *Witnesses*  
of Christ's Resurrection, not only in  
*Jerusalem,* and *Judea,* and *Samaria,*  
but to the utmost parts of the  
Earth.

And this I still believe to be the  
case of those many Nations of the  
World, that are yet under the violent,  
and almost invincible prejudice of E-  
ducation in another religion. That  
which may reasonably satisfie us who  
are brought up in the Christian Reli-  
gion, is not likely to be effectual e-  
nough to convince them; and there-  
fore I think it still very credible, that  
if Persons of sincere minds did go to  
preach the pure Christian Religion,  
free from those errors and superstiti-  
ons which have crept into it, to infi-  
del Nations, that God would still ena-  
ble such Persons to work Miracles,  
without

without which there would be little  
 Vol. 10. or no probability of success. For as  
 the Wisdom of God is not wont to  
 do that which is superfluous, so nei-  
 ther to be wanting in that which is  
 necessary; and tho' the morality of  
 the Christian Religion be admirable,  
 and very apt to recommend it self to  
 the reason of Mankind, yet the Do-  
 ctine of the Death of the Son of  
 God would be such a stumbling block,  
 as would be hard for them to get o-  
 ver; and the Relation of ancient  
 Miracles would not easily be ad-  
 mitted, by those who are utterly  
 strangers to our Histories of former  
 times; and consequently not so fit  
 to judge of what credit and value they  
 are.

It is not good to be confident where  
 we are not certain; but this I piously  
 believe, that God would extraordi-  
 narily countenance such an attempt  
 by all fitting assistance, as he did the  
 first publication of the Gospel; be-  
 cause the reason and necessity is plain-  
 ly the same in this case, as it was at  
 first. For if God did not think the  
 Apostles

Apostles naked testimony, unless it were armed with Miracles, sufficient for the conviction of the World, concerning the Resurrection of Christ, of which themselves had been Eye-Witnesses, much less can we expect to gain credit, who only carry the relation of these ancient matters of fact, attested by Histories, to which they are wholly strangers.

And I do strongly hope that there still remains a great harvest among the *Gentiles*, yet to be gain'd to Christianity, before the end of the World; and that the Providence of God will in his own appointed time, make a farther step in the Conversion of the Infidel Nations; and that more of the Kingdoms of the Earth shall become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ; and that yet before the end of all things, the light of the Gospel shall be display'd in a glorious manner, not only in those vast Empires of *Tartary*, and *China*, and *Japan*, and *Indostan*, and other great Kingdoms of the East, but in the large and dark Regions of the new discover'd World.

 World; for that solemn promise  
 Vol. 10. which God made to his Son, Psal.  
 2. 8. *Ask of me, and I will give thee  
 the Heathen for thine inheritance, and  
 the utmost parts of the earth for thy  
 possession,* seems to be very far from  
 being yet fully accomplish'd; and  
 since this is like to be the work of  
 some ages, the time perhaps is not  
 far off, when it shall begin: and tho'  
 I see no sufficient grounds from Scri-  
 pture to believe the personal reign of  
 Christ upon Earth for a thousand  
 years; yet it seems to be not impro-  
 bable, that sometime before the end  
 of the World, the glorious Kingdom  
 of Christ, I mean the prevalency of  
 the pure Christian Religion, should  
 be of as long a continuance, as the  
 reign of *Mahomet*, and Anti-  
 Christ have been, both which  
 have now lasted about a thousand  
 years.

For it is clear, that *the fulness of  
 the Gentiles* is not yet *come in*, because  
 the *Jews* still continue dispers'd over  
 the World, which is the mark our Sa-  
 viour hath given of the Call and Resti-  
 tution



before the end of the World.

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tution of the Jews, Luke 21. 24. Serm. 3.  
They shall fall by the edge of the Sword,  
and shall be led away captive into all  
Nations; and Jerusalem shall be trod-  
den down of the Gentiles, until the  
time of the Gentiles be fulfilled: And  
thus St. Paul explains to us this  
Prediction of our Saviour, Rom. 11.  
25. I would not, brethren, that you  
should be ignorant of this mystery,  
That blindness in part is hapned unto  
Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles  
be come in.

So that this we have reason to ex-  
pect, and this let us pray for, That the  
knowledge of the Lord may fill the  
earth, as the waters cover the Sea;  
that his ways may be known upon  
earth, and his saving health among  
all nations; and with St. Paul, Let  
our hearty desire and prayer for Israel  
be, that they may be saved; that there  
may come out of Sion a deliverer, and  
he may turn away unrighteousness from  
Jacob; especially since St. Paul  
hath given us reason to hope, that  
this would be of so great Benefit  
and Advantage to the Gentile  
M World,

~~~~~ World, Rom. 11. 12. If the fall  
 Vol. 10. of the Jews be the riches of the
 world, and the diminution of them,
 the riches of the Gentiles: how much
 more their fulness? And Ver. 15.
 For if the casting away of them be
 the reconciling of the World: what
 shall the receiving of them be, but
 life from the dead? Intimating,
 that as the rejection of the Jews
 was the occasion of Publishing the
 Gospel, that Doctrine of Reconcili-
 ation, to the World, as the same
 Apostle doth elsewhere call it; so
 the receiving of them to favour
 again, should be life from the
 dead, that is, a kind of Resur-
 rection to the remainder of the
 Gentile World, who had so long
 lain in darkness, and the shadow
 of Death. Which the God of Peace,
 who brought again from the Dead
 our Lord Jesus Christ, the great
 Shepherd of the Sheep, through the
 Blood of the Everlasting Covenant
 grant, in his due time may be
 accomplish'd; that those other Sheep
 which are not yet of this fold, may
 be

before the end of the World.

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hear his voice, and be brought in, that there may be one fold, and one Shepherd; and all the ends of the earth may see the Salvation of our God.

Serm. 9.

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Serm. 6.

SERMON VI.

Preach'd at *White-Hall*. 1682.

The possibility of the Resurrection
asserted and prov'd.

A C T S XXVI. 8.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

THE Resurrection of the dead is one of the great Articles of the Christian Faith; and yet so it hath hapned, that this great Article of our Religion hath been made one of the

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chief

Vol. 10 chief Objections against it. There is
 Vol. 10 thing that Christianity hath been
 more upbraided withal, both by the
 Heathens of old, and by the Infidels
 of later times, than the impossibili-
 ty of this Article. So that it is a
 matter of great consideration and con-
 sequence, to vindicate our Religion
 in this particular. For if the thing
 be evidently impossible, then it is
 highly unreasonable to propose it to
 the belief of Mankind.

I know that some more devout than
 wise, and who, it is to be hoped,
 mean better than they understand,
 make nothing of impossibilities in mat-
 ters of Faith, and would fain per-
 swade us, that the more impossible any
 thing is, for that very reason it is the
 fitter to be believed; and that is is an
 Argument of a poor and low Faith,
 to believe only things that are possi-
 ble; but a generous and heroical Faith
 will swallow contradictions, with as
 much ease as reason assents to the
 plainest and most evident Proposi-
 tions. *Tertullian* in the heat of his
 Zeal and Eloquence, upon this point
 of the Death and Resurrection of
 Christ

Christ, lets fall a very odd passage, and which must have many grains of allowance to make it tolerable. *Prorsus credibile est*, (saith he) *quia ineptum est*; *certum est quia impossibile*; it is therefore very credible, because it is foolish; and certain, because it is impossible; and this (says he) is *necessarium dedecus fidei*, that it is necessary the Christian faith should be thus disgraced, by the belief of impossibilities and contradictions. I suppose he means, that this Article of the Resurrection was not in it self the less credible, because the Heathen Philosophers cavil'd at it, as a thing impossible and contradictory, and endeavour'd to disgrace the Christian Religion upon that account. For had he meant otherwise, that the thing was therefore credible, because it was really and in it self foolish and impossible; this had been to recommend the Christian Religion, from the absurdity of the things to be believed; which would be a strange commendation of any Religion to the sober and reasonable part of Mankind.

I know not what some men may find in themselves; but I must freely ac-

Vol. 10

knowledge, that I could never yet attain to that bold and hardy degree of Faith, as to believe any thing for this reason, because it was impossible : for this would be to believe a thing to be, because I am sure it cannot be. So that I am very far from being of his mind, that wanted not only more difficulties, but even impossibilities in the Christian Religion, to exercise his Faith upon.

'Tis true indeed, *Abraham*, when he was offering up his Son *Isaac*, is said against hope to have believed in hope; but he did not believe against a plain impossibility; for the Apostle to the *Hebrews* expressly tells us, that He reasoned that God was able to raise him from the dead. But had he believed this impossible, he could not have reconciled the command of God, with his promise; the command to Sacrifice *Isaac*, with the promise which he had made before, That in his seed (which was *Isaac*) all the nations of the earth should be blessed. So that tho' God was pleased to try his Faith with a great difficulty; yet with no impossibility.

I premise all this, to satisfie men **Serm.6.**
how necessary it is to vindicate the
Christian Religion from this objection,
of the impossibility of any of its Arti-
cles. And whatever *Tertullian* might
say in a rhetorical rant, it is very
plain, that the ancient Fathers did not
think the Resurrection to be a thing
impossible; for then they would ne-
ver have attempted, as they very fre-
quently do, to have answered the ob-
jections of the Heathens against it,
from the pretended impossibility of
it.

To be sure *St. Paul* did not think
the Resurrection of the dead a thing
impossible, for then he would never
have ask'd that question, *Why should
it be thought a thing incredible with you,
that God should raise the dead?* Nothing
being so likely to be thought incredi-
ble, and upon so good reason, as that
which is impossible.

Leaving therefore to the Church of
Rome that fool-hardiness of Faith, to
believe things to be true, which at the
same time their reason plainly tells
them

~~~~~  
 Vol. 10. them are impossible, I shall at this  
 time endeavour to assert and vindicate  
 this Article of the Resurrection, from  
 the pretended impossibility of it. And  
 I hope by God's assistance to make the  
 possibility of the thing so plain, as to  
 leave no considerable scruple about it,  
 in any free and unprejudiced mind.  
 And this I shall do from these words  
 of St. Paul, which are part of the de-  
 fence which he made for himself be-  
 fore *Festus* and *Agrippa*; the substance  
 whereof is this, that he had lived a  
 blameless and inoffensive life among  
 the *Jews*, in whose Religion he had  
 been bred up; that he was of the  
 strictest sect of that Religion, a *Phari-  
 see*, which in opposition to the *Saddu-  
 cees*, maintained the Resurrection of  
 the dead, and a future state of Rewards  
 and Punishments in another life; and  
 that for the hope of this he was call'd  
 in question, and accused by the *Jews*,  
*ver. 6, 7. And now I stand here, and  
 am judged, for the hope of the promise  
 made unto the Fathers; unto which pro-  
 mise, our twelve Tribes instantly serving  
 God day and night, hope to come; for  
 which hope sake, King Agrippa, I am  
 accused of the Jews.* That is, he was  
 accused

accused for Preaching that *Jesus* was Risen from the Dead, which is a particular instance of the general Doctrine of the Resurrection, which was entertained by the greatest part of the *Jews*, and which to the natural reason of Mankind, (however the Heathen in opposition to the Christian Religion were prejudiced against it) hath nothing in it that is incredible. And for this he appeals to his Judges, *Festus* and *Agrippa*, *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?* Serm. 6.

Which words being a Question without an answer, imply in them these *two* Propositions.

*First*, That it was thought by some a thing incredible, that the dead should be raised. This is supposed in the Question, as the Foundation of it. For he who asks why a thing is so, supposeth it to be so.

*Secondly*, That this Apprehension, that it is a thing incredible, that God should raise the Dead, is very unreasonable. For the question being left unanswered,

Vol. 10. unanswer'd, implies its own answer, and is to be resolv'd into this affirmative, That there is no reason why they or any Man else should think it a thing incredible, that God should raise the dead.

I shall speak to these *two* Propositions, as briefly as I can; and then shew what influence this Doctrine of the Resurrection ought to have upon our lives.

*First*, That it was thought by some a thing incredible, that God should raise the Dead. This *St. Paul* had reason to suppose, having from his own experience found men so averse from the entertaining of this Doctrine. When he preached to the Philosophers at *Athens*, and declared to them the Resurrection of one *Jesus* from the Dead, they were amazed at this new Doctrine, and knew not what he meant by it, *Acts* 17. 18. *They said, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange Gods, because he preached unto them, Jesus and the Resurrection.* He had Discours'd to them of the Resurrection of one *Jesus* from the Dead; but this business of



*suppos'd by some, incredible.*

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*Serm. 6*

of the Resurrection, was a thing so remote from their Apprehensions, that they had no manner of conception of it, but understood him quite in another sense, as if he had declared to them two new Deities, *Jesus* and *Anastasis*; as if he had brought a new God and a new Goddess among them, *Jesus* and *the Resurrection*. And when he discoursed to them again more fully of this matter, it is said, *ver. 32.* that *when they heard of the Resurrection of the dead, they mocked.* And at the *24. ver.* of this *26. Chap.* when he spake of the Resurrection, *Festus* told him, he would hear him no farther, and that he looked upon him as a man *besides himself, whom much learning had made mad.* *Festus* looked upon this business of the Resurrection, as the wild speculation of a crazy head. And indeed the Heathens generally, even those who believed the immortality of the Soul, and another state after this life, looked upon the Resurrection of the Body, as a thing impossible. *Pliny* I remember reckons it among those things which are impossible, and which God himself cannot do, *revocare defunctos, to call back the dead*

*dead to life;* and in the Primitive times, the Heathen Philosophers very much derided the Christians, upon account of this strange Doctrine of the Resurrection, looking always upon this Article of their Faith, as a ridiculous and impossible assertion.

So easie is it for prejudice to blind the minds of men, and to represent every thing to them, which hath a great appearance of difficulty in it, as impossible. But I shall endeavour to shew, that if the matter be thoroughly examined, there is no ground for any such Apprehension. I proceed therefore to the,

*Second Proposition, namely, that this Apprehension, that it is an incredible thing that God should raise the dead, is very unreasonable. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? That is, there is no sufficient reason, why any Man should look upon the Resurrection of the dead, as a thing impossible to the Power of God; the only reason why they thought it incredible being, because they judged it impossible;*

possible: so that nothing can be vainer, than for men to pretend to believe the Resurrection, and yet at the same time to grant it to be a thing in reason impossible; because no man can believe that, which he thinks to be incredible; and the impossibility of a thing is the best reason any Man can have to think a thing incredible. So that the meaning of St. Paul's question is, *Why should it be thought a thing impossible, that God should raise the dead?*

To come then to the business. I shall endeavour to shew, that there is no sufficient reason, why men should look upon the Resurrection of the dead, as a thing impossible to God. *Why should it be thought a thing incredible (that is impossible) with you, that God should raise the dead?* Which question implies in it these three things.

I. That it is above the Power of Nature, to raise the dead.

II. But it is not above the Power of God, to raise the dead. And

III. That

III. That God should be able to do this, is by no means incredible to natural reason.

I. This question implies, that it is above the Power of Nature, to raise the dead; and therefore the Apostle put the question very cautiously, *Why should it be thought incredible, that God should raise the dead?* By which he seems to grant, that it is impossible to any Natural Power, to raise the dead; which is granted on all hands.

II. But this question does plainly imply, that it is not above the Power of God, to do this. Tho' the raising of the dead to life, be a thing above the Power of Nature, yet why should it be thought incredible that God, who is the Author of Nature, should be able to do this? And indeed the Apostle's putting the question in this manner, takes away the main ground of this Objection against the Resurrection, from the impossibility of the thing. For the main reason, why it was looked upon as impossible, was, because it



was contrary to the course of Nature, that there should be any return from a perfect Privation to a Habit; and that a Body perfectly dead should be restored to life again: but for all this, no Man that believes a God, who made the World and this Natural Frame of things, but must think it very reasonable to believe, that he can do things far above the Power of any thing that he hath made.

III. This Question implies that it is not a thing incredible to natural Reason, that God should be able to raise the Dead. I do not say, that by natural light we can discover that God *will* raise the Dead; for that depending meerly upon the Will of God, can no otherwise be certainly known than by Divine Revelation: But that God *can* do this, is not at all incredible to natural Reason. And this is sufficiently implied in the Question which St. Paul asks, in which he appeals to *Festus* and *Agrippa*, neither of them Christians, *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the Dead?* And why should he appeal to them concerning

cerning the Credibility of this matter, if it be a thing incredible to natural Reason ?

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That it is not, I shall first endeavour to prove, and then to answer the chief Objections against the Possibility of it.

And I prove it thus. It is not incredible to natural Reason, that God made the World and all the Creatures in it; that Mankind is *his Offspring*; and that *he gives us life and breath and all things*. This was acknowledged and firmly believed by many of the Heathen. And indeed who ever believes that the being of God may be known by natural Light, must grant, that it may be known by the natural Light of Reason, that God made the World; because one of the chief Arguments for the being of a God, is taken from those visible Effects of Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness, which we see in the frame of the World. Now he that can do the greater, can undoubtedly do the less; he that made all things of nothing, can much more

more raise a Body out of the Dust; he who at first gave Life to so many inanimate Beings, can easily restore that which is dead to life again. It is an excellent saying of one of the Jewish Rabbies, "That he who made that which was not, to be, can certainly make that which once was, to be again. This hath the force of a Demonstration: for no Man that believes that God hath done the one, can make any doubt, but that he can if he please do the other.

This seems to be so very clear, that they must be strong Objections indeed, that can render it incredible.

There are but *two* that I know of, that are of any Consideration, and I shall not be afraid to represent them to you with their utmost Advantage; and they are these.

*First*, Against the Resurrection in general; it is pretended impossible, after the Bodies of men are resolved into Dust, to recollect all the disper-

sed parts, and bring them together,  
 Vol. 10. to be united into one Body.

The *Second* is levell'd against the Resurrection in some particular Instances, and pretends it to be impossible in some Cases only, *viz.* When that which was the matter of one Man's Body, does afterwards become the matter of another Man's Body; in which Case, say they, it is impossible that both these should, at the Resurrection, each have their own Body.

The difficulty of both these Objections is perfectly avoided by those who hold, that it is not necessary that our Bodies at the Resurrection should consist of the very same parts of matter that they did before; there being no such great difference between one parcel of Dust and another; neither in respect of the Power of God, which can as easily command *this* parcel of Dust, as *that* to become a living Body, and being united to the Soul to rise up and walk; so that the Miracle of the Resurrection will be all one in the  
 main,



main, whether our Bodies be made of the very same Matter they were before, or not. Nor will there be any difference as to us: for whatever Matter our Bodies be made of, when they are once reunited to our Souls, they will be then as much our own, as if they had been made of the very same Matter of which they consisted before. Besides that the change which the Resurrection will make in our Bodies will be so great, that we could not know them to be the same, tho' they were so. Serm. 6.

Now upon this supposition, which seems Philosophical enough, the force of both these Objections is wholly declined. But there is no need to fly to this refuge; and therefore I will take this Article of the Resurrection in the strictest sense, for the raising of a Body to life, consisting of the same individual Matter that it did before; and in this sense I think it hath generally been received by Christians, not without ground from Scripture. I will only mention one Text, which seems very strongly to imply it, *Rev. 20. 13. And the Sea gave up the*

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 Vol. 10. *Dead which were in it, and Death and the Grave delivered up the Dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to his Works. Now why should the Sea and the Grave be said to deliver up their Dead, if there were not a Resurrection of the same Body; but any Dust formed into a living Body, and united to the Soul, would serve the turn? We will therefore take it for granted, that the very same Body shall be raised. And I doubt not even in this sense to vindicate the possibility of the Resurrection from both these Objections.*

First, Against the Resurrection in general of the same Body; it is pretended impossible, after the Bodies of men are mouldred into Dust, and by infinite accidents have been scattered up and down the World, and have undergone a thousand changes, to recollect and rally together the very same Parts of which they consisted before. This the Heathen used to object to the primitive Christians; for which reason they also used to burn the Bodies of the Martyrs, and

to

to scatter their Ashes in the Air, to be blown about by the Wind, in de-
rision of their hopes of a Resur-
rection. Serm. 6.

I know not how strong malice might make this Objection to appear; but surely in reason it is very weak: for it wholly depends upon a gross mistake of the Nature of God, and his Providence, as if it did not extend to the smallest things, as if God did not know all things that he hath made, and had them not always in his View, and perfectly under his Command, and as if it were a trouble and burden to infinite Knowledge and Power, to understand and order the least things: whereas infinite Knowledge and Power can know and manage all things, with as much ease, as we can understand and order any one thing.

So that this Objection is grounded upon a low and false apprehension of the Divine Nature, and is only fit for *Epicurus* his Herd, who fancied to themselves a sort of slothful and unthinking Deities, whose happiness

Vol. 10. consisted in their laziness, and a privilege to do nothing. I proceed therefore to the

Second Objection, which is more close and pressing; and this is level'd against the Resurrection in some particular instances. I will mention but *two*, by which all the rest may be measured and answered.

One is, of those who are drowned in the Sea, and their Bodies eaten up by Fishes, and turned into their nourishment, and those Fishes perhaps eaten afterwards by men, and converted into the substance of their Bodies.

The other is of the *Canibals*, some of whom, as credible Relations tell us, have lived wholly, or chiefly of the flesh of men; and consequently the whole, or the greatest part of the substance of their Bodies is made of the Bodies of other men. In these and the like Cases, wherein one Man's Body is supposed to be turned into the substance of another Man's Body, how

how should both these at the Resurrection, each recover his own Body? *Serm. 6.*

So that this Objection is like that of the *Sadduces* to our Saviour, concerning a Woman that had had seven Husbands, they ask, *Whose Wife of the seven shall she be at the Resurrection?* So here, when several have had the same Body, Whose shall it be at the Resurrection? And how shall they be supplied that have it not?

This is the Objection; and in order to the answering of it, I shall premise these *two* things.

I. That the Body of Man is not a constant and permanent thing, always continuing in the same State, and consisting of the same Matter: but a successive thing, which is continually spending, and continually renewing it self, every day loosing some thing of the Matter which it had before, and gaining new; so that most men have new Bodies, oftner then they have new Cloaths; only with this difference, that we change

~ change our Cloaths commonly at
Vol. 10. once, but our Bodies by degrees.

And this is undeniably certain from experience. For so much as our Bodies grow, so much new Matter is added to them, over and besides the repairing of what is continually spent; and after a Man be come to his full growth, so much of his Food, as every day turns into Nourishment, so much of his yesterdays Body is usually wasted, and carryed off by insensible perspiration, that is, breathed out at the Pores of his Body; which according to the *Statick* Experiment of *Sanctorius* a learned Physician, who for several years together weighed himself exactly every day, is (as I remember) according to the proportion of five to eight, of all that a Man eats and drinks. Now according to this proportion, every Man must change his Body several times in a year.

'Tis true indeed, the more solid parts of the Body, as the Bones, do not change so often as the fluid and fleshy: but that they also do change,

is certain, because they grow, and whatever grows is nourish'd and spends, because otherwise it would not need to be repaired. Serm. 6.

II. The Body which a Man hath at any time of his life, is as much his own Body, as that which he hath at his Death; so that if the very Matter of his Body, which a Man had any time of his life, be raised, it is as much his own and the same Body, as that which he had at his Death, and commonly much more perfect; because they who die of lingering Sickness, or old Age, are usually meer Skeletons when they die; so that there is no reason to suppose, that the very Matter of which our Bodies consist at the time of our Death, shall be that which shall be raised, that being commonly the worst, and most imperfect Body of all the rest.

These *two* things being premised, the Answer to this Objection cannot be difficult. For as to the more solid and firm Parts of the Body, as the Skull and Bones, 'tis not I think pretended

Vol. 10. tended that the *Canibals* eat them; and if they did, so much of the Matter, even of these solid Parts, waists away in a few years, as being collected together would supply them many times over. And as for the fleshy and fluid Parts, these are so very often changed and renewed, that we can allow the *Canibals* to eat them all up, and to turn them all into nourishment, and yet no Man need contend for want of a Body of his own at the Resurrection, viz. any of those Bodies which he had ten or twenty years before; which are every whit as good, and as much his own, as that which was eaten.

You will pardon me I hope, that I have dwelt so long upon so contentious an Argument, when you consider how necessary what I have said is to the vindicating of so great an Article of our Religion; and especially in this Evil Age of Unbelief, when geater Matters than this are call'd in question.

Having thus shewn that the Resurrection is not a thing incredible to natural

natural Reason, I should now proceed to shew the certainty of it from *Serm. 6.* Divine Revelation. For as Reason tells us, it is not impossible; so the Word of God hath assur'd us, that it is certain. The Texts of Scripture are so many and clear to this purpose, and so well known to all Christians, that I will produce none. I shall only tell you, that as it is expressly revealed in the Gospel, so our blessed Saviour, for the Confirmation of our Faith, and the Comfort and Encouragement of our Hope, hath given us the Experiment of it in his own Resurrection, which is *the earnest and first-fruits of ours.* So St. Paul tells us, that *Christ is risen from the Dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.* And that Christ did really rise from the Dead, we have as good Evidence, as for any ancient Matter of Fact which we do most firmly believe; and more and greater Evidence than this, the thing is not capable of; and because it is not, no reasonable Man ought to require it.

Now

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Now what remains, but to conclude this Discourse, with those practical Inferences, which our Apostle makes from this Doctrine of the Resurrection; and I shall mention these *two*.

The First for our Support and Comfort under the Infirmities and Miseries of this mortal Life.

The Second for the Encouragement of Obedience and a Good Life.

I. For our Comfort and Support under the Infirmities and Miseries of this mortal State. The Consideration of the glorious change of our Bodies at the Resurrection of the Just, cannot but be a great Comfort to us, under all bodily Pain and Sufferings.

One of the greatest Burdens of Humane Nature, is the Frailty and Infirmary of our Bodies, the Necessities they are frequently prest withal, the manifold Diseases they are liable to,

to, and the Danger and Terrors of Death, to which they are continually subject and enslaved. But the time is coming, if we be careful to prepare our selves for it, when we shall be cloathed with other kind of Bodies, free from all these Miseries and Inconveniencies which Flesh and Blood is subject to. For *These vile Bodies shall be changed, and fashioned like to the glorious Body of the Son of God.* When our Bodies shall be raised to a new Life, they shall become incorruptible; *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality; and then shall come to pass the Saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* When this last Enemy is conquered, there shall be no fleshly Lusts, nor brutish Passions, to fight against the Soul; no Law in our Members, to war against the Law of our Minds; no disease to torment us, no danger of Death to amaze and terrifie us. Then all the Passions and Appetites of our outward Man shall be subject to the Reason of our Minds, and our Bodies shall partake of

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of the Immortality of our Souls. It is but a very little while, that our Spirits shall be crush'd, and clogg'd with these heavy and sluggish Bodies. At the Resurrection they shall be refined from all Dregs of Corruption, and become *Spiritual* and *Incarnate* and *Glorious*, and every way suited to the Activity and Perfection of a glorified Soul, and *the Spirits of just men made perfect*.

II. For the Encouragement of Obedience and a Good Life. Let the belief of this great Article of our Faith, have the same influence upon us, which St. Paul tells us it had upon him, *Acts 24. 15, 16. I have hope towards God, that there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the just and unjust; and herein do I exercise my self, always to have a Conscience void of offence, towards God and towards men.* The firm belief of a Resurrection to another life should make every one of us very careful how we demean our selves in this Life, and afraid to do any thing, or

to neglect any thing that may defeat our hopes of a blessed Immortality, and expose us to the extream and endless misery of Body and Soul in another life. Serm. 6.

Particularly it should be an Argument to us, *to glorifie God in our bodies, and in our spirits*; and to use the *members* of the one, and the *faculties* of the other, as *instruments of Righteousness, unto Holiness*. We should Reverence our selves, and take heed, not only how we de-file our Souls by sinful Passions, but how we dishonour our Bodies by sensual and brutish lusts; since God hath designed so great an Honour and Happines for both at the Resurrection.

So often as we think of a Blessed Resurrection to eternal life, and the happy Consequences of it, the thoughts of so glorious a Reward should make us diligent and unwearied in the Service of so good a Master, and so great a Prince, who can and will prefer

us to infinitely greater Honours,
 Vol. 10. than any are to be had in this
 World. This inference the Apo-
 stle makes from the Doctrine of
 the Resurrection, 1 Cor. 15. There-
 fore, my beloved brethren, be ye
 stedfast, and unmoveable, always a-
 bounding in the work of the Lord;
 for as much as ye know that your
 labour shall not be in vain in the
 Lord.

Nay we may begin this Blessed
 State, while we are upon Earth,
 by settling our hearts and affec-
 tions upon the things that are above,
 and having our Conversations in
 Heaven, from whence also we look
 for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ;
 who shall change our vile Bodies,
 that they may be fashioned like unto his
 glorious body, according to the working
 whereby he is able to subdue all things
 to himself.

Now the God of Peace, who brought
 again from the dead our Lord Je-
 sus Christ, the great Shepherd of the
 Sheep, through the blood of the ever-
 lasting

to a good life.

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lasting Covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us always that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Serm. 6.

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The first thing that I
wrote down in the first
book was to do with
the things which I
saw in the world
which I thought
were worth
to be written down
and to be remembered
by the people of the
world to do with
the things which I
saw in the world
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SERMON VII.

The Resurrection of our Saviour
consider'd, as an Argument for
seeking things above.

COL. III. 1. 2.

*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those
things which are above, where Christ
sitteth at the right hand of God. Set
your affections on things above; not on
things on the earth.*

THE Apostle in this Epistle (as
his manner is in all the rest)
having laid the Doctrine of the Go-
spel for a Foundation, and endeavour-
ed to rectifie some errors, both in Do-
ctrine

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 Vol. 10 Doctrine and Practice, which the Christians at *Coloss* were seduced into, by the guile and arts of false Teachers and Apostles, as particularly *the worship of Angels*, and out of a pretence *humility*, addressing themselves to of God by their Mediation, which is the particular Scope and Design of this Epistle; The Apostle, I say, having in the former part of it, endeavoured to set them right in this matter, and to establish their minds, in the true Faith and Doctrine of Christ; in the latter part of it, he exhorts them to conversations answerable to the Doctrine of Christ, to a Holy and Heavenly life; at the beginning of this third Chapter. *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above; not on things on the earth.*

This Inference is drawn from what he had said at a good distance before, namely, at the 12. ver. of the former Chapter, *Being buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of*  
 God,

*to resemble their Saviour.*

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*Serm. 7.*

God, who hath raised him from the dead. Being buried with him in baptism. For the full understanding of this expression, we must have recourse to that parallel Text, *Rom. 6. 3, 4, 5.* which will explain to us the meaning of this Phrase. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death; we shall be also in the likeness of his Resurrection. Where we see, that to be baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ, is to be baptized into the similitude and likeness of them; and the Resemblance is this, that as Christ being dead was buried in the Grave, and after some stay in it, that is, for three days, he was raised again out of it, by the glorious Power of God, to a new and Heavenly life, being not long after taken up into Heaven to live at the right hand of God; so Christians, when they were baptized, were immerst

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into the water three times, their Bodies being covered all over with it; which is therefore call'd our being *buried with him in baptism into death*; and after some short stay under water, were *raised* or taken up again out of it, as if they had been *recovered to a new life*; by all which was spiritually signified, our dying to sin, and being raised to a Divine and Heavenly life, *through the faith of the operation of God*; that is, by that Divine and supernatural Power, which raised up Christ from the dead. So that Christians from thenceforth were *to reckon themselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ*, as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. 6. 11.*

Now upon this ground, that we are *buried with Christ in baptism*, and *risen with him to a new and heavenly life*, the Apostle founds the exhortation in the Text, *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above; not on things on the earth.* So that the words are an earnest Exhortation to a Divine Life, and a Spiritual and Heavenly



*to seek the things above.*

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Heavenly Conversation. In which there are *two* things to be considered. Serm. 7.

*First*, The Duty we are Exhorted to, which is heavenly-mindedness. *Seek the things which are above, and Set your affections on things above.*

*Secondly*, The Arguments by which the Apostle urgeth and presseth this Exhortation. *If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things which are above; and Seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.* So that my work will be,

*First*, To shew the Nature of the Duty, to which we are exhorted. And,

*Secondly*, The force of the Arguments, which are used to perswade us to it.

*First*, For the Nature of the Duty, to which we are Exhorted; and it is exprest both Affirmatively and Negatively,

I. Affirma-

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1. Affirmatively ; and the Apostle useth *two* several expressions. *Seek the things which are above ;* and *Set your affections on things above.*

2. Negatively, *And not on things on the earth.* And this seems to be added, not only to explain and ascertain the object, and to add vehemence and earnestness to the Exhortation ; but likewise to set off the Excellency of the object, by way of Opposition and Comparison. *On the things that are above ; and not upon those pitiful and inferiour things, which are upon the earth.* And likewise to shew the inconsistency of these, and the impossibility of seeking and setting our affections upon both in an intense degree. For that would be to have two chief ends, *to love God, and Mammon ; to serve two masters,* which our Saviour hath told us is impossible. But this I shall use afterwards, as an Argument to enforce the Exhortation.

To explain the Nature of this Duty, I shall consider the act, and the object.

I. For

I. For the act, here are *two* words used to express it, *ἐπιταίε*, and *ορνεύει*, *seek*, and *set your affections*; and in these *two* words, these *four* things seem to be comprehended; an Act of our understandings about these things; the ardency of our affections; and the Activity of our endeavours in the pursuit of them; and a clear preference of the things which are above, to the things of the earth, when they come in competition. For these two words do comprehend, not only the Power of our Understandings, and Wills, and Affections, and an earnest attention and Application of mind to these things; but the activity of our endeavours about them.

1. Here is implied an Act of our Understandings, that we should mind and think upon these things, that we should often consider them, and meditate upon them; that Heaven should be much in our thoughts, and the Glory and Excellency of that State which we hope to attain to, and by what ways and means we may come to

~ to be made partakers of that blessed  
Vol. 10. inheritance.

2. It implies likewise an Act of our Affections ; that we heartily love and desire the things that are above, with that ardency and vehemency of Affection, which is proportionable to the worth and excellency of them. And both these are included in the word *φρονεῖτε*, which is sometimes translated, *to mind*, sometimes *to set our Affections upon a thing*.

3. Activity and industry in the prosecution of these things, if by any means we may attain them. And this is implied in the word *ζητεῖτε*, *seek the things which are above*. When we know there are such Treasures in Heaven, so great a reward laid up for good men, *joys so unspeakable and full of glory*, and when our Understandings have dwelt so long upon these things, as to work upon our Affections, these, like so many springs of motion, will set our Endeavours on work, for the obtaining of what we so much love and desire, and will make us inquisitive, with the young man in the Gospel,



spel, *What good thing we shall do, that we may inherit eternal life*; by what means we may best secure our Title to Heaven and Happiness; and very industrious to acquire these qualities and dispositions, which will fit us for Heaven, and the blessed sight and enjoyment of God; nay, by which we may begin this happy State here, by our conversation in Heaven, whilst we are Sojourning here below, as *Pilgrims and Strangers in the earth.*

Serm. 7.

4. It implies a clear preference of the things above, to the things of the Earth, when they come in competition. And in this sense the word *προεῖν* is observed to be used in good Authors, for taking part with, and adhering to one side, when two Parties or Interests come in competition. And indeed this Phrase and form of Speech, when the thing is exprest affirmatively and negatively, is very often used by way of comparison, when two things come in competition. *Lay not up for your selves treasures upon earth: but lay up for your selves treasures in heaven. Labour not for the meat that perisheth: but for that which endureth to eternal life.*

So

So here: *Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.* When Heaven and Earth come in Competition, the Happiness of the next life and the Enjoyments of this, the interest of your Souls, and of your Bodies *the things which are not seen, and are eternal, and the things which are seen and are but temporal,* a Holy and Heavenly and Virtuous life, and a Sensual and sinful course, *chuse the better part* stick to that which is the true and lasting interest; prefer Heaven before Earth, and the care of your Souls, to that of your Bodies, things eternal, to things Temporal, and a Holy and Virtuous life, which leads to Heaven to those sinful and vicious practices which will sink men into Perdition. For that this also the Apostle means by *things on the earth,* sinful lusts and Practices, seems very probable from what follows at the 5. *Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth.*

II. Let us consider the object of this Act, what it is that we are to seek and set our affections upon; and that is *the things which are above.*

i. The

1. The glorious God and Father of all, and his blessed and eternal Son our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and the holy Spirit of God; these are the great Objects of our Contemplation and Adoration. And then the Holy Angels, and *the spirits of just men made perfect*, who are Examples to us, of doing the will of God here on Earth, as it is done by them in Heaven.

2. The blessed State and Condition which we aspire after in the next life, with all the Joys and Glories of it, *such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man.*

3. The Dispositions to be acquired, and the Actions and Duties to be performed by us, as necessary qualifications and means for the obtaining of this Happiness, and bringing us to the possession of it; all these are comprehended in the latitude of the Object, *the things which are above.*

And

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And to seek, and mind, and set our affections upon these, is to do those things, which the consideration of each of these respectively calls for; so to meditate on God, and mind him, as to fear, and love, and serve him; to seek his glory as our last End, and the Enjoyment of him as our chief Good; to seek his favour above all things, and to sue to him, as the Fountain of all Grace, and *the giver of every good and perfect gift*, and of all blessings Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal, by the powerful intercession of his Son, the great and only Mediator between God and Man, to be obtained for us, and to be wrought in us, by the powerful Virtue and Operation of the holy Spirit. So to mind the Angels and blessed Saints above, as to aspire after their Society, by imitating their Virtues, and *being followers of those, who through faith and patience have inherited the the promises*. So to Meditate on our future Blessedness, as to raise our Hearts and Affections above this World, and effectually to engage us to fit our selves for that blessed State and Condition, that we may



may be meet to be made partakers of that glorious inheritance. And lastly, so to mind all the duties and means necessary and conducing to our Salvation, as effectually to perform them; to order our lives and all the actions of them, with a regard to eternity; in a word, to omit and neglect nothing that may farther and promote the great design of our eternal Salvation, and to do nothing that may contradict or hinder it. This is *to seek and set our affections upon the things that are above.* And thus I have done with the first thing I Propounded, the Nature of the Duty which we are exhorted to. I proceed to the,

Second Thing I Propounded, which was to consider the force of the Arguments, which are used to perswade us to it. Here are *three* Arguments in the Text to this purpose; *two* of them are express; and the *third* of them implied.

I. *If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things which are above.*

P

II. *Seek*

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II. *Seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.*

III. *The Transcendent and Incomparable Excellency of the things above, in comparison of earthly things. This is intimated in the opposition, Set your affections on the things which are above; and not on things on the earth. I shall briefly shew the force of each of these Arguments.*

I. *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek the things which are above. That is, if ye believe his Resurrection, ye will be conformed to him in it, ye be made partakers of the Power and Virtue of it.*

I. *If ye believe the Resurrection of Christ. The Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, was the great Seal of his Ministry, and Confirmation of his Doctrine; and one great Branch of his Doctrine, was Heavenly-mindedness, that we should lay up for our selves treasures in heaven, because where*

treasures are

*for seeking things above.*

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*treasure 'is, there will our hearts be also; that we should first seek the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof.*

Serm. 7.

2. If we will bear a Conformity and Resemblance to him in his Resurrection. He is our great Pattern and Example, which the Gospel propounds to us; and that we may have the nearer conformity to him, the Apostle doth not only propose the Virtues of his life to our imitation, but where we cannot literally imitate him, the Apostle urgeth spiritual Conformity; that those things which he did and suffered in his Body, we should do it, and suffer spiritually; as Christ dyed for sin, so we should die to sin; as he literally rose again from the dead, so in conformity to him, we should be spiritually raised to newness of life. As he ascended into Heaven, so we should ascend thither also in our hearts and affections. Col. 2. 12. Buried with him of baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. Rom. 6. 4, 5. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death,

P 2

that

*that like as Christ was raised up from the*  
 Vol. 10. *dead by the glory of the Father, even so*  
*we also should walk in newness of life.*  
*For if we have been planted together in*  
*the likeness of his death, we shall be al-*  
*so in the likeness of his Resurrection. To*  
*be raised from the dead, is in order*  
*to a new life. So the Apostle tells us*  
*ver. 9, 10, 11. Knowing that Christ*  
*being raised from the dead, dieth no*  
*more, death hath no more dominion over*  
*him. For in that he died, he died unto*  
*sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth*  
*unto God. Likewise reckon ye also your*  
*selves to be dead indeed unto sin: but a-*  
*live unto God thorough Jesus Christ our*  
*Lord. As the Resurrection of Christ*  
*was in order to a better and happier*  
*life, to his Ascension into Heaven, and*  
*his living with God: So in Confor-*  
*mity to Christ, our spiritual Resur-*  
*rection should be in order to a Heav-*  
*ly and Divine life. And what is the*  
*meaning of all this? But that men are*  
*apt to imitate those whom they love,*  
*and do affect to resemble them as much*  
*as they can. And therefore to endear*  
*our duty to us, the mortification of*  
*our lusts, and a Holy life, the Apostle*  
*tells us that hereby we bear a Con-*  
 formity



*for seeking things above.*

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formity to Christ, the great Object of  
our love and imitation.

Serm. 7.

3. If ye be made partakers of the Power and Virtue of his Resurrection. The Resurrection of Christ is not only a Pattern, but hath a Power and Efficacy in it, to raise us to a Spiritual and Heavenly life. When Christ rose, he did not rise alone, but many of the Bodies of the Saints who were dead, rose with him, to signifie to us the Power of his Resurrection. It communicated a Virtue to those, who had an interest in the merits of his Death and Sufferings, whereby they are enabled to live a new and Heavenly life. *John 11. 25. I am the Resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live. Eph. 1. 19. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. Phil. 3. 10, 11. That I may know him, and the power of his Resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I may attain the Resurrection from the*

P. 3

dead.

~ dead. Col. 2. 13. *And you being dead*  
 Vol. 10. *in your sins, and the uncircumcision of*  
*your flesh, hath he quicken'd together with*  
*him.* Now this Power is derived to  
 us by believing on him, who raised up  
 Jesus from the dead, that he is also able  
 to raise us, who are dead in trespasses  
 and sins, to a divine and heavenly  
 life. The

II. Argument is contained in these  
 words, *Seek the things which are above,*  
*where Christ sitteth at the right hand of*  
*God.* Which words do declare to us  
 the exaltation of Christ's human Nature,  
 and his being advanced to be the  
 King and Governour of his Church,  
 having all Power and Judgment committed  
 to him. Luke 24. 26. Christ's  
 Ascension, and his sitting at the right  
 hand of God is called, *His entering in-*  
*to his glory.* Ought he not to have suffered  
 these things, and then to enter in-  
 to his glory? that is, to be invested  
 with all Power and Authority for the  
 good of the Church. But most particularly  
 the Apostle describes this, Eph. 1. 20, 21, 22. *And set him at his*  
*own right hand in heavenly places, far*  
*above all principalities and powers, and*  
*might*

for seeking things above.

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might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the Church. Serm. 7.

And now the force of this Argument is from the Relation that is between the Head and the Members, between Christ and Christians. The Members have an affection for the Head, which makes them aspire Heaven-wards; and the Head hath an influence upon the Members. *If I be lifted up from the earth, says our Lord, I will draw all men unto me.* This is spoken of his Crucifixion, signifying what death he should die, as the Text tells us, *John* 12. 32, 33. But it is proportionably true of his Ascension, and Sitting at the Right Hand of God; for there is a Power and Virtue in the Resurrection of Christ, and in his Ascension into Heaven, as well as in his Death, to draw all men to him. The gift of God's holy Spirit is the fruit of his Ascension and Exaltation at the right hand of the Majesty on high: and 'tis by the powerful Operation of the Spirit of

Vol. 10. God upon our Hearts, that we are raised to newness of life, and our affections fix'd upon Heavenly things. We are naturally bowed down to the Earth, and enclined to the things of this World, *curva in terris anima, & caelestium inanes*: but our glorified Saviour sitting at the right hand of God, by the Power of his Spirit, draws our affections to him. The

III. And last Argument, which is but implied in the Text, is the transcendent and incomparable excellency of heavenly things, above things on the earth, which the Apostle intimates by the opposition, *Set your affections on things above: not on things on the earth.* Earthly things are perishing and transitory, gross and unsatisfactory, and cannot be the felicity of an immortal Soul, being neither suited to the spiritual Nature, nor to the immortal duration of our Souls; they can neither satisfy us while we live, nor preserve us from death, nor comfort us in it, nor accompany us into the other world, nor contribute any thing to our Happiness there; and if they can do nothing towards our Happiness,



pineness, why should we set our Hearts upon them? They that seek for Happiness in earthly things, are like the Women sitting over our Saviour's Sepulchre, with their Faces bowed down to the earth, they *seek the living among the dead*; our Happiness *is not here, 'tis risen, 'tis above.* Let our Hearts ascend thither, where our Happiness and our Treasure is. Why should we bestow our affections upon these low and mean things, when there are incomparably better Objects to fix them upon?

The Inference from all this shall be, to engage and perswade us by all these Arguments and Considerations, *to seek, and mind the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and to have our conversation there, where our Saviour is, and from whence also we look for him again, to change these vile bodies, that they may be made like unto his glorious body, according to the working of that mighty power, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.* Let all our Actions have relation to another world, and our Conversation declare, that we are *mindful of another Country, that is a Heavenly.* Is Christ our Head risen

sen and ascended into Heaven? Let  
 Vol. 10. us in our Hearts and Affections follow  
 him thither, and patiently wait till he  
 receive our Souls, and raise our Bo-  
 dies, and take us wholly to himself,  
 that we may be *for ever with the*  
*Lord.*

The Resurrection of Christ is a  
 Demonstration of a future state after  
 this life, and a pledge of a blessed Im-  
 mortality in another World. For our  
 Lord by his Resurrection from the  
 Dead hath conquered Death, and  
*abolish'd it, and brought life and immor-*  
*tality to light.* He is *the first fruits of*  
*them that slept,* and his Resurrection is  
 an earnest and assurance of ours; and  
 from thence the Apostle makes this in-  
 ference, *Therefore, my beloved brethren,*  
*be ye stedfast and unmoveable, always a-*  
*bounding in the work of the Lord;* for as  
*much as ye know, that your labour shall*  
*not be in vain in the Lord.* The belief  
 of a future state after this life, should  
 put us upon the most earnest and vi-  
 gorous endeavours to secure this hap-  
 py condition to our selves; *if by any*  
*means,* as the Apostle expresseth it,  
*we may attain the Resurrection of the*  
*dead.*

*seek the things above.*

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dead. It should raise us above the World and the lusts of it, above all the terrors and temptations of it. *Serm. 7.*

As on the one hand, the serious thoughts of our mortality should check our eager pursuit of this World: So on the other hand, the belief of a life to come should quicken our endeavours for the obtaining of it; seeing we hope for so happy a state, we should prepare our selves for it by Purity, and Holiness of Heart and life, by Perseverance, and a *patient continuance in well-doing.* What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, who have such hopes and expectations? Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Now that life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel, what greater, what other design can any Man propose to himself, than to be happy for ever? For such a prize, who would not strive, and run, and take any pains? Who would not deny himself the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, resist temptations, and conflict with difficulties, and glory in tribulations and sufferings, and

*and be constant and faithful to the death,  
Vol. 10. in hope of that eternal life, which God  
that cannot lie hath promised?*

In our pursuit of the things of this World, we usually prevent enjoyment, by expectation; we anticipate our own Happiness, and eat out the heart and sweetness of worldly pleasures, by delightful fore-thoughts of them, so that when we come to possess them, they do not answer the expectation, nor satisfy the desires which were raised about them, and they vanish into nothing: but the things which are above, are so great, so solid, so durable, so glorious, that we cannot raise our thoughts to an equal height with them; we cannot enlarge our desires beyond a possibility of satisfaction. Our hearts are greater than the World: but God is greater than our hearts; and the Happiness which he hath laid up for us, is like himself, incomprehensibly great and glorious. Let the thoughts of this raise us above this World, and inspire us with greater thoughts and designs, than the care and concerns of this present life.

We



We all profess most firmly to believe, that after a few days, we shall leave this World, and all the Enjoyments of it, and go to the place from whence we shall not return; that we shall enter upon an unchangeable state of Happiness or Misery, according as we have demeaned our selves in this present life; that great care and diligence is necessary *to work out our own salvation*; that there must be a great preparation of our selves by unspotted purity of Heart and Life, to make our selves *meet for an inheritance with them that are sanctified*; that we must *labour, and strive, and run, and fight, and give all diligence to make our calling and election sure*; that we had need to *watch and pray always, that we may be accounted worthy to escape the judgment of the great day, and to stand before the son of man*. Such thoughts as these should continually possess our Souls, and Heaven should be always in our eye, as if, with St Stephen, *We saw the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, to see how we behave our selves here below; and when we have fought a good fight, and finish'd our course, and kept the faith, to receive us*

*to*

*to himself, that where he is, there we  
Vol. 10. may be also.*

*To whom, with the Father, and the ho-  
ly Ghost, be all honour and glory now and  
for evermore. Amen.*

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S E R-

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# SERMON VIII

The Circumstances and Benefits of  
our Saviour's Ascension.

ACTS I. 9, 10, 11.

*And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

**T**HERE are two occasions of this day\* Accidentally met together, which bear some resemblance to one another; the Ascension of our Blessed Saviour

Preach'd  
May 29.  
being Ascension-  
day.

*Vol. 10.* Saviour into Heaven, and his Exaltation in his Kingdom, being crowned with glory and honour, and set on the right hand of the Majesty on high; and the Restoration of our Sovereign to his just Rights, and Royal State and Dignity here upon Earth, by a Miraculous Providence of God, and as it were by a kind of Resurrection from the Dead.

The first of these being of a more Spiritual and Excellent Nature, shall be the subject of my present Discourse, not forgetting the other in the Application of it.

The great Foundation of our Religion is the History of our Saviour, of his Incarnation, and Miracles, and Life, of his Resurrection from the Dead, and Ascension into Heaven, and Intercession for us at the Right Hand of God; and the Doctrines and Articles concerning these, make up the main Body of the Christian Faith; and therefore, nothing can be more useful, than the Explication of these, and a serious Consideration and Meditation upon them.



In these words you have an account of our Saviour's Ascension into Heaven; concerning which we will consider these three things.

*First,* The Circumstances foregoing his Ascension.

*Secondly,* The Circumstances of his Ascension.

*Thirdly,* The consequent Benefits and Advantages of it.

*First,* The Circumstances foregoing his Ascension. *And when he had spoken these things, he was taken up.* This refers to the Discourse which our Saviour had with his Apostles, immediately before he was taken up from them into Heaven, of which we have an account in the Verses before the Text, *Ver. 4.* Being assembled with them, and just ready to take his leave of them, he commands them *that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which they had heard of him; that is, they should not disperse themselves,*

Q

'till

Vol. 10. *~* 'till the Holy Ghost, which he had  
 promised to send from his Father,  
 was come upon them, in those mi-  
 raculous Gifts and Powers, whereby  
 they should be qualified for the  
 Preaching of the Gospel to the  
 World.

And when our Saviour had given  
 them this Charge, they put a Que-  
 stion to him, concerning a thing  
 which, notwithstanding he had so  
 plainly declared to them, that his  
*kingdom was not of this World*, did  
 still run in their minds, about the  
 Temporal Reign of the *Messias*, and  
 a glorious Kingdom by him to be set  
 up among the *Jews*; v. 6. *They asked*  
*of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at*  
*this time restore the kingdom unto Is-*  
*rael?* To this our Saviour gives them  
 no direct Answer, neither that he  
 would, nor that he would not do  
 what they expected; but gently re-  
 prehends their Curiosity; v. 7. *It is*  
*not for you to know the times and*  
*seasons, which the Father hath put in*  
*to his own power.* And instead of sa-  
 tisfying them in things that did not  
 concern them, he discourseth to them  
 about

about those things which did concern them; namely, how they should be qualified and sent forth to preach the Gospel to the World, v. 8. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the utmost parts of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, he was taken up. These are the Circumstances preceeding his Ascension.

Secondly, We will consider the Circumstances of his Ascension; and they are these four.

I. That our Saviour was taken up; while he was blessing his Disciples, Luke 24. 51. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven.

II. That he was taken up in the view of his Disciples, and while their eyes were attentively fixt upon him. While they beheld, he was taken up, v. 9. And v. 10. it is said, They look-

*ed steadfastly towards Heaven, as he went*  
 Vol. 10. 44.

III. That he was taken up in a Cloud. And a Cloud received him out of their sight.

IV. The Place whither he went, v. 11. *This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven; which is elsewhere more particularly exprest, by declaring the Dignity to which he was exalted in Heaven, being set down on the right hand of God, and having all power in Heaven and in Earth committed to him. These are the chief Circumstances of his Ascension, which I shall speak briefly to.*

I. That our Blessed Saviour was taken up, while he was blessing his Disciples. This St. Luke does not mention here in the History of the Acts, having mentioned it before in his Gospel, to which he refers us, Luke 24. 50, 51. *speaking of our Saviour and his Apostles; And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lift up his Hands, and blessed them. Lifting up of the Hands was a Ceremony*



used among the Jews, in blessing the People; Levit. 9. 22. it is said there, *Sermon 8.* that Aaron lift up his hands towards the people, and blessed them. So our Saviour here, in imitation of the usual Ceremonies among the Jews. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven. The first tidings of our Saviour's Birth were attended with Praises to God, and Blessings to Men; Glory to God on high, Peace on earth, and good will toward Men. And when he died, he breathed out his Soul in Blessings to his Enemies; in the height of his Sufferings he was full of hearty Prayers and good Wishes for those who were the cause of them. Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And after his Resurrection from the dead, just as he left the World, he was taken out of it, and translated into Heaven, with a Blessing in his Mouth. While he blessed them he was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven. And indeed his whole Life, all that he did, and all that he suffered, his coming into the World, and his going out of it, was all a Blessing to Mankind.

Vol. 10 *God sent him to bless us, in turning us away every one from his iniquity. He was always wishing well to us, and doing well for us, he went about doing good.*

A blessed Pattern to us, leaving us an Example, that we should follow his steps; a lovely and desirable Example; in imitation whereof, we should endeavour that our whole Life may be a Blessing and Benefit to Mankind; and that when we leave the World, we may be found so doing as our Lord did, doing the work of Heaven while we are going thither.

II. He was taken up in the view of his Disciples, and while their Eyes were attentively fixt upon him. *While they beheld, he was taken up,* v. 9. And v. 10. it is said, *They looked stedfastly toward Heaven, as he went up.* After the Apostles were fully convinc'd, by several Appearances of our Saviour to them, and familiar Conversation with them, that he was indeed risen from the dead; that they might be fully satisfied that he came from God, and went to him,

him, he was in their sight, while he was speaking to them, taken up into Heaven. And this is no small Confirmation of the Truth of our Religion, that our Saviour did not only work the greatest Miracles while he was alive, and after Death rose again, and conversed among Men; but was visibly taken up into Heaven. So that if all things be duly considered, never did any Man give so many Evidences of his being sent from God, as our Blessed Saviour did. He delivered the Truth of God with a Divine Authority; and did the Works of God with all imaginable Evidence of a Divine Power; and with a Divine Patience submitted to the Will of God, enduring the greatest Sufferings; and by the mighty Power of God was raised from the dead; and in a visible manner, by the same Divine Power, taken up into Heaven.

III. He was taken up in a Cloud. *He was taken up, and a Cloud received him out of their sight.* Which Circumstance, tho' it do not seem very material, yet does it fitly represent to

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us the difference between the two Dispensations of the Law, and of the Gospel. *Elias* was carried up by a *Whirlwind* into Heaven, in a *fiery Chariot* with *Horses of fire*: but our Saviour in a *Cloud*; to signify to us the coolness and calmness of the Gospel-Dispensation, in comparison of that of the Law; which difference our Saviour had before observed to his Disciples, upon a remarkable occasion, *Luke 9. 54, 55.* When they would have call'd for fire from Heaven to have consumed the *Samaritans* for refusing to entertain our Saviour, as *Elias* had done in a like case, our Saviour severely reproves that fierce Spirit of theirs, as by no means suitable to the Gospel. *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of. For the Son of man came not to destroy mens lives, but to save them.* And just answerably to the difference between the Spirit of *Elias* and our Saviour, was the different manner of their Translation into Heaven; the one gently received up in a *Cloud*; the other violently taken up by a *Whirlwind*, carried in a *Chariot of fire* drawn by *Horses of fire*.

And



And there is likewise another difference not altogether unworthy of our Observation. The blessing which *Elijah* left to *Elishah* at his parting from him, and the Promise of his Spirit to be imparted to him, is conceived in very doubtful Words, *2 Kings* 2. 9. *Elijah said to Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, Let a double portion of thy Spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me, when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee: but if thou see me not, it shall not be so.* This was very doubtful, suitable to the obscurity of the Law: but our Saviour, when he parted from his Disciples, makes a plain and absolute Promise of the Holy Ghost to them, answerable to the clearness and grace of the Gospel. *Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.* So wisely did God order all Circumstances concerning our Saviour, that every thing belonging to him, every Action that he did, and every Circumstance of it might have some important Signification.

## IV. The

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IV. The last Circumstance of our Saviour's Ascension is the place whither he went, *ver. 11. This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven.* And this is elsewhere more particularly exprest, by declaring the Dignity to which he was exalted in Heaven, *Being set down on the right hand of God,* and *having all power in Heaven and in Earth committed to him,* Mark 16. 19. *He was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of God;* which Phrase signifies our Saviour's being advanced in his Humane Nature, to an Honour and Dignity next to that of the Divine Majesty; the right hand being esteemed the place of greatest Honour. This exaltation of Christ, the Apostle tells us, was conferr'd upon him as a Reward of his great Humiliation and Sufferings, *Heb. 12. 2. Who for the joy that was set before him endured the Cross and despised the Shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.* And by Virtue of this Exaltation, the Apostle proves him to be exalted in his Humane Nature above the Angels, *Heb. 1. 3, 4. When he had by himself purged*

purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, being made so much better than the Angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they, that is, being advanced to a higher Dignity; for Name among the Hebrews signifies Dignity and Honour. So the Apostle useth the word Name, Phil. 2. 9, 10, 11. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth, and that every Tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. So likewise, Eph. 1. 20, 21. Whom he raised from the dead, and set at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all Principalities, and Powers, and Might, and Dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this World, but in that which is to come. And now wherein this Dignity doth consist, the same Apostle tells us in the next words, That he hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the Church, which is the same with what our Saviour told his

his Apostles before his Ascension, *All*  
 Vol. 10. *Power is given me in Heaven and*  
*in Earth*, that is, God hath committed  
 the Government of the World in-  
 to his hands, for the Benefit and Ad-  
 vantage of his Church here in this  
 World, and for the dispensing of Re-  
 wards and Punishments to good and  
 bad men in the next life.

And tho' the Apostles did only  
 see him taken up, and received in a  
 Cloud out of their sight, and were  
 not Witnesses of his Advancement  
 and Exaltation at the right hand of  
 God; yet they had, and we have suf-  
 ficient assurance of it, both by what  
 our Saviour declared before his As-  
 cension, and by the Effects which fol-  
 lowed after. Before he ascended, he  
 told them whither he was going, and  
 what Power and Dignity would be  
 conferred upon him, that *all Power*  
*in Heaven and Earth was committed to*  
*him*; and that as an Evidence of this  
 Exaltation at the right hand of God,  
 and the Power there conferr'd upon  
 him, he would in a few days send  
 down the Holy Ghost upon them in a  
 sensible manner, and in great and  
 sen-



sensible effects, enabling them to speak with Tongues, and to work all sorts of Miracles. After this he was in their sight taken up from them, and carried towards Heaven; and ten days after, the Holy Ghost, according to his Promise, came down upon them in miraculous Powers and Gifts. So that here was abundant Evidence to them of his Exaltation in Heaven, they having seen him taken up and carried thitherwards, and after this finding the wonderful Effects of his being there, and of the Power which was conferred upon him. Scm. 8.

The *third* and *last* thing to be spoken to, is the consequent Benefits of our Saviour's Ascension and Exaltation; and they are chiefly these three, The sending of the Holy Ghost; his powerful Intercession for us at the right hand of God; and the Confirmation of our Faith, as to the truth of his Doctrine in general, and particularly as to his coming to Judgment.

I. The sending of the Holy Ghost in Miraculous powers and gifts upon the

the Apostles, to qualifie them for the  
Vol. 10. speedy and effectual propagation of  
the Gospel, and to give credit to them  
in the Preaching of it. By the gifts of  
Tongues, they were enabled to Preach  
the Gospel to all Nations; and by the  
other Miraculous Powers, God bare  
witness to the Testimony which they  
gave of our Saviour's Doctrine and Re-  
surrection. And this was a great bene-  
fit: for to this we owe the great Blef-  
sing of the Gospel, and the spreading  
of the Christian Religion thro' the  
World; and this was properly the fruit  
of our Saviour's Ascension into Hea-  
ven, and his Exaltation at the Right  
Hand of God, and of that Royal  
Power and Majesty which he was  
invested withal. God in his wise  
Dispensation of things, having so  
ordered, that this Dignity and Power  
should be the reward of our Saviour's  
Obedience and Sufferings; which  
may serve to explain to us that pas-  
sage *John 7. 39. This spake he of the  
spirit, which they that believe on him  
should receive. For the holy-ghost was  
not yet given, because Jesus was not yet  
glorified.* The giving of these gifts of  
the Holy Ghost was purposely re-  
served

served by God, to be an instance of that Power and Glory, wherewith our Saviour was to be invested upon his Ascension into Heaven, and Exaltation at the Right Hand of God; and therefore our Saviour tells his Disciples, that they ought not to be troubled at his Departure, because, till he had left them, the Holy Ghost would not come, *John 16. 17. I tell you the truth, It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you.*

II. Another mighty benefit of our Saviour's Ascension and Exaltation, is his powerful intercession for us at the Right Hand of God. And this is a mighty Advantage and Comfort, to have a perpetual Patron and Advocate at the Right Hand of God, to plead our Cause, to solicit our concerns, and represent our wants, and to offer up our Prayers and Requests to God, in the virtue of his Meritorious Sacrifice; to have so good a Friend in the Court of Heaven, in such power and favour with the great King of the World. This under the Law was shadowed by the High-Priest's going into

Vol. 10. ~~~~~ into the Holy of Holys once every Year alone, carrying blood with him, to offer for the sins of the People; answerably to which, our Saviour is once for all entred into the Heavens, to intercede with God for us, by the representation of that Sacrifice which he offer'd for our sins, and of that blood which was shed for us. So the Apostle tells us, *Heb. 9. 24.* That Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven it self, to appear in the presence of God for us. And this is a mighty comfort to us under the guilt of our sins, that we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is a propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world. This is a great comfort under all Tryals and Temptations, that We have not an high Priest that cannot be touched with a sense of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are. He that is our Mediator and Intercessor, knows by experience the infirmities of our Nature, and hath learned by his own Sufferings to compassionate ours.

And



And this is a mighty encouragement to our Prayers, and gives us confidence and hopes of good success in our Addresses to God, that they are offered by so powerful and prevalent a hand. So the Apostle reasons, *Heb. 4. 14. 16. Seeing then we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God; let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

In a word, this may animate us against all the Enemies of our Salvation, because he that hath all power in Heaven and Earth is concerned for us, and is continually soliciting our Cause with God, *Heb. 7. 25. Wherefore he is able to save them to the utmost, who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us.*

III. The Ascension of our Saviour into Heaven is a mighty confirmation of our Faith, both as to the truth of his Doctrine in general, and particularly as to his coming again at the

R

end

And

**Vol. 10.** end of the World, to judge the quick and the dead, to reward the righteous, and to punish the sinners and ungodly.

1. As to the Truth of his Doctrine in general. If after all the Miracles of his life, and his Resurrection from the dead, any Man can doubt whether he came from God, and was sent by him to teach the World; yet this methinks is evidence beyond all exception, that God took him to himself, that he was visibly taken up into Heaven; and tho' the Witnesses of his Ascension did not see him in Heaven, yet the sending of the Holy Ghost, according to his promise, was an abundant Evidence that he was received up into glory. Upon this account it is that our Saviour says, that the coming of the Holy Ghost should convince the world of sin, for not believing in him; because the sending of the Holy Ghost, was an Evidence that he was in glory; and his being taken up into glory, was a demonstration that he was a true Prophet, and sent from God, and consequently that they were

guilty

guilty of a great sin, who did not believe in him. And

Serm: 8.

2. This likewise is a great Confirmation of our Faith, as to our Saviour's coming again at the end of the World, to judge the quick and the dead. St. Peter tells us, *Acts 10. 42.* that our Saviour after his Resurrection did particularly give in charge to his Apostles, *to testify to the people, that it was he that was ordained of God, to be the judge of quick and dead.* And what Argument more proper to persuade them of this, than to see him visibly taken up into Heaven; and at the very time of his Ascension, to be admonish'd by Angels, that this same Person whom they saw carried up into Heaven, should in the same visible manner come down from Heaven again at the end of the World? So the Text tells us, *that while the Apostles looked stedfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, that is, two Angels in the appearance of men, which said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like*

R 1

manner

*manner, as ye have seen him go into*  
 Vol. 10. *Heaven, that is, in a visible manner,*  
*and in a Cloud. For as he was received*  
*up in a Cloud out of their sight, so at his*  
*return to judge the World, men shall*  
*see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds*  
*of Heaven, Matt. 24. 30. And this is*  
*a great Confirmation of our Faith of*  
*a future Judgment, that our Saviour*  
*immediately after his Resurrection,*  
*declared himself to be appointed by*  
*God Judge of quick and dead; and*  
*when he was ascended, the Angels de-*  
*clared that he should come again in like*  
*manner as they had seen him taken up.*  
*So that they who believe his Ascensi-*  
*on, cannot doubt of his return to*  
*Judgment; nothing being more cre-*  
*dible, than the saying of one whom*  
*God raised from the dead, and visibly*  
*took to himself.*

And now to make some reflection  
 upon what hath been delivered. The  
 Consideration of our Saviour's Ascen-  
 sion into Heaven, and Exaltation at  
 the right hand of God, is very com-  
 fortable to all true Christians in these  
 two respects.



I. In respect of our Condition in this World. Serm. 8.

II. In respect of the Happiness of the next World.

I. In respect of our Condition in this World. The Church of Christ, and every particular Member of it, every true Christian, are exposed to a great many Troubles and Dangers in this World: but it is matter of great Comfort to us, in the Consideration of all the Evils we are liable to, that we are under his Patronage and Protection, who hath all Power given him in Heaven and Earth. He who is the head and defender of the Church, is set down on the right hand of the Majesty of God, exalted far above Principalities, and Powers, and Might, and Dominion, and every name that is named in this World, and that which is to come; so that the true Church of Christ need not fear either the Powers of this World, or the Malice of Devils, because we have a sure Friend, who is greater than all these, whom God hath made his Vicegerent, and hath

*put all things under his feet, and hath given the Government of the World, and of all Creatures, into his hands, for the good and benefit of his Church, who is able to protect his Church, and every true Member of it against all the Injuries of Earth, and the Malice of Hell; and if he permit us at any time to fall into Sufferings, he is able to support us under them, and to reward us for them; and if he be for us, who can be against us? he that died, yet rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God; and maketh Intercession for us, Rom. 14. 9. For this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living; and now that he is in Heaven, and cloathed with Majesty and Glory, he is not less concerned for us, than when he conversed with us upon Earth, and suffered and died for us: for he is there in our Nature, that Nature in which he suffered more than any of us can do; and therefore we may with Confidence make our Applications to him, in all our distresses and difficulties, because he is nearly allied to us, Bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and was once*

once tempted like our selves, and from the Experience of his own Tryals and Sufferings, still retains a quick sense of the Frailties and Infirmities of Mortality. This Consideration the Apostle to the Hebrews makes use of to support Christians under all their Persecutions for the Profession of Christianity, Heb. 4. 14, 15. Seeing then we have a great high Priest, that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God; let us hold fast our Profession. For we have not an high Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

II. The Consideration of Christ's Ascension and Exaltation is likewise matter of Comfort to us, in respect of the Happiness which we hope for in the next World. No Religion that ever was in the World hath given men so sensible a Demonstration of a future Life, and a blessed Immortality in another World, as the Christian Religion hath done, by the Resurrection of our blessed Saviour from the dead, and his visible Ascension into Heaven. This is a sensible Argument,

248 *The Consideration of Christ's Ascension,*  
Vol. 10. ment, and levell'd to the Capacities  
of all Mankind. The reasonings of  
the Philosophers concerning the Im-  
mortality of Mens Souls, and a future  
State after this Life, besides the un-  
certainty of them, have also this  
disadvantage, that they are only cal-  
culated for the more refined and spe-  
culative part of mankind: but every  
Man is capable of the force of this  
Argument, that he who declared to  
the World another Life after this,  
and the happy Condition of good  
Men in another World, was himself  
raised from the dead, and visibly  
taken up into Heaven. And now it  
is no difficult matter for us to believe  
that God will raise us, and advance  
us to Glory and Happiness, when  
we consider what an earnest he hath  
given us of this, by the working of  
that mighty power which he wrought in  
Christ, when he raised him from the  
dead, and set him at his own right  
hand in heavenly places.

If then we believe that Christ is  
ascended into Heaven, and sits at the  
right hand of God, let this raise our  
Minds above the vain delights and  
perishing



perishing enjoyments of this World, to the consideration of those better and more glorious things that are above; let us often ascend thither in our thoughts, whither our Saviour is gone before us, to prepare a place for us; and from whence he hath promised to come again at the end of the world, to receive us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also.

But then we must endeavour to live as he did; if we hope to go to him, when we die. Every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure. Let us then have our conversation in heaven, from whence also we look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working of that mighty power, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.

To conclude; Let us heartily thank God for the whole Dispensation of our Salvation, by the Incarnation and Doctrine, by the holy Life and meritorious Death of our Blessed Saviour, and by that demonstration of  
God's

God's mighty power and goodness, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; having put all things under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body.

The consideration whereof is (as you have heard) a mighty Consolation to us, under all the Troubles and Dangers to which the Church of Christ is exposed in this World. He who hath all power committed to him by God, and is made head over all things for the benefit and advantage of the Church, we may be sure, will have a particular care of it, and tender it as *his own body*: and as he is able, he is ready upon all occasions to protect and defend his own Religion, and the true Professors of it, against all the Fury and Malice of Men and Devils, so that the gates of hell, the strongest Combinations and deepest

deepest Conspiracies of all the Powers of Darknes, *shall not finally prevail against it.* Here is the foundation of our hopes and confidence, that our Redeemer is strong, and that God hath given him a Kingdom and Power, that is paramount and superiour to all earthly Kingdoms and Powers; and though they should conspire together, and be of one mind, unite all their force, and give their power and strength unto the beast, to make war with the Lamb and his company, that is, the true Church and faithful Servants of Christ; yet *the Lamb shall overcome them, because he is Lord of lords, and King of kings.*

And let us likewise bless God for the wonderful Restoration of his Majesty to the Government of these Kingdoms, who under Christ is the great Defender of our Faith and Religion; and let us pay that Duty and Obedience, which becomes us, to a Prince whom God hath so miraculously Preserved and Restored; and pour out our most fervent Prayers to God, that he would long preserve him, and protect his Person from all Dangers, who  
is

is the great Security of our Religion,  
 Vol. 10. \* and the Life of all our Hopes; and  
 \* Preach- as truly as any Prince ever was to  
 ed so- any People, the Light of our Eyes,  
 wards the and the Breath of our Nostrils; and  
 conclusion that God would make him wise as an  
 of the Angel of God, to go in and out before  
 Reign of this great People; and grant to him,  
 R. Ch. II. and all the People of this Land, to  
 know in this our day the things that be-  
 long to our Peace, before they be hid  
 from our eyes.

And let us likewise bless God for the  
 wonderful Restoration of his Majesty  
 to the Government of these King-  
 doms, who under Christ is the great  
 Defender of our Faith and Religion;  
 and let us say that Duty and Obedi-  
 ence which becomes us to a Prince  
 whom God hath so miraculously re-  
 stored and restored; and pour out our  
 most fervent Prayers to God, that he  
 would long preserve him, and pro-  
 tect his Person from all Dangers, who

S E R



# SERMON IX.

Of the Gift of Tongues conferr'd  
on the Apostles.

ACTS II. 1, 2, 3, 4.

*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance.*

ONE of the chief Designs of the Dispensation of God towards the Jews, and of the giving of the Law to them by Moses, was to be a

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Type


**Vol. 10.** Type of the Christian Church, and of the Dispensation of the Gospel by the Son of God; and therefore no wonder, if there be a great correspondence between them, and that the Divine Providence should so order the event of things, that the seasons of dispensing the great Evangelical blessings, should happen at the same times; when the great blessings of the Law, which were the Types of them, were dispensed and commemorated. Thus our Saviour, who was *the Lamb of God*, was slain and offer'd up at the same time, that the Passover was kept, and the Pascal Lamb was slain and offer'd up among the *Jews*; and the Redemption of the World from the slavery of sin and Satan is celebrated by Christians, at the very same season of the Year, when the deliverance of the *Israelites* from the *Egyptian* slavery was commemorated by them: and as at the time of *Pentecost* (which was fifty days after,) the *Jews* were appointed to rejoyce before the Lord, and to offer their first-fruits by way of grateful acknowledgment to God for the Fruits of the Earth, then newly gathered in; so did God likewise at the same

same time impart the first-fruits of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, who were to be the first and chief Labourers in that spiritual Harvest, to which they were appointed by the Lord of the Harvest: and which is yet more remarkable, at the same season that the Law was delivered to the Jews from Mount Sinai, and the first Covenant establish'd, namely, at the time of Pentecost, as is commonly supposed by the Jewish Doctors, and as may probably be collected from the Text, *Exod. 19. 1.* I say at that very time, the Gospel, which contains the Terms of the New Covenant, began to be published from Mount Zion, in as wonderful, tho' not so terrible a manner, as the Law was given from Mount Sinai. And thus it was foretold by the ancient Prophets, *Isa. 2. 3.* and *Micah. 4. 2.* that out of Sion should go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

I shall briefly explain the Words, and as I pass along make some short Observations upon them, and then fix upon that which is mainly intended in them, viz. This first and most

miracu-

Vol. 10. miraculous Gift of the Holy Ghost,  
 when they were assembled together  
 at Jerusalem, upon the day of Pen-  
 tecost.

Preached  
 on Whit-  
 Sunday.

*When the day of Pentecost was fully come, that is, when the fifty days after Easter were fulfilled, upon the fiftieth day which was called the day of Pentecost, they were all with one accord in one place. They were all, that is, all the twelve Apostles; for upon them it was that this Gift of Tongues was bestowed; because they were appointed to be the chief Publishers of the Gospel, having been Eye-witnesses of our Saviour's Miracles, and particularly of his Resurrection from the dead. There is no mention of any other in this Chapter, but only of the twelve Apostles. Ver. 14. we find Peter and the eleven spoken of; and ver. 37. it is said that the multitude, who were astonished at this Miracle, spake to Peter and the rest of the Apostles.*

*They were all with one accord in one place. Unity is an excellent Qualification*



cation and Disposition for the Holy Spirit of God and his gifts; for which reason the peace and good agreement of Christians is called by St. Paul, *the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace.* When the Apostles were of *one heart, and one mind,* then the holy Spirit of God came down upon them in this wonderful manner.

Ver. 2. *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind.* As they were together waiting for the promise of the Father, all on the sudden there came a sound, as of a strong gust of Wind. This was a fit Emblem of the Divine Spirit; for to this our Saviour had compar'd it, in his Discourse with Nicodemus, *John 3. 8. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit.*

*As of a rushing mighty wind.* To signify to us, that the publication of the Gospel was attended with the same Divine Presence and Power, that the giving of the Law was; but

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not with the same Circumstances of terror, which the Apostle to the Hebrews describes, when he sets forth to us the difference between Mount Sinai and Mount Sion, that is between the two Dispensations of the Law and the Gospel. Heb. 12. 18, 19. speaking of Mount Sinai, from which the Law was given, *Ye are not come, says he, unto the mount, that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; that is, that terrible voice of God, wherein the ten words of the Law were delivered; which voice then shook the Earth, as the Apostle tells us, ver. 26. A voice so terrible, that they who heard it, earnestly begged, that they might hear it no more.* These were all Circumstances of great horror: but at the coming down of the Holy Ghost, here was no Trumpet nor terrifying voice, no Thunder nor Darkness nor Tempest, only the sound as it were of a strong gust of Wind, as a sensible signification of a Divine Presence and Power.

And

And, it filled all the house where they were sitting. The whole house, to represent the World, which was to be filled with the sound of the Gospel, according to that of the Psalmist cited by St. Paul, Rom. 10. 18. where speaking of the general publication of the Gospel, *Their sound*, says he, *went out into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.*

*It filled all the house.* This is that, which, ver. 5. of this Chapter, our Saviour calls *baptizing* the Apostles with the Holy Ghost, so that they who sat in the House were as it were immerst in the Holy Ghost, as they who were Baptized with water, were overwhelmed and covered all over with water, which is the proper notion of Baptism.

Ver. 3. *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, as it were of fire, and it sat upon each of them. Cloven Tongues*, to signify the diversity and distribution of them; this Gift being imparted to every one of the Apostles: for it is

~~~~~ said, that these Tongues *sat upon each*  
 Vol. 10. *of them.*

Cloven Tongues as it were of fire, to signify the penetrating Virtue and Efficacy of their Preaching And this is that which *John* the Baptist calls *Baptizing with the Holy Ghost and with fire*, meaning the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, in the form of fiery Tongues; *divided*, to signify the diversity of them. At first men were all of one Language, and the confusion and division of Tongues, was a curse and punishment upon them, and the cause of their dispersion through the World: but now God by the Gift of several Tongues designed to gather Mankind together, and to unite them in one Religion.

And it sat upon each of them. These *cloven fiery tongues sat upon each of the Apostles*, that is, remained visibly upon them for some time; to signify the permanency of this Gift of Tongues. It was not like several of the other Miraculous Gifts, which did not constantly reside upon them; for
 they

they had them not at all times, nor when they pleased, but as God was pleased to dispense and communicate them: but this Gift of Tongues was constant, because they had continual use of it; and it was common to all the Apostles, because they were to be the Publishers of the Gospel, and the witnesses of our Lord's Resurrection, which was the great Miracle whereby the Gospel was to be confirmed.

Serm. 9.

Ver. 4. And they were all filled with the holy-ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance. And began to speak with other tongues. The vulgar Translation renders it, *variis linguis, with divers tongues*; that is, they spake several Languages besides their own Mother Tongue, or as it is exprest in our Saviour's promise to the Apostles, *Mark 16. 17. With new tongues. These signs, says our Lord before his Ascension, shall follow them that believe; They shall speak with new tongues*; that is, they should all on the sudden speak Languages which they had never Learn'd, nor had any knowledge of before.


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I know not who was the first Author of that conceit, that the Miracle was not in the Speakers, but in the Hearers; that is, the Apostles spake in their own Mother Tongue, (the *Syriack*;) and the hearers of several Nations heard them every one in their own Language; which indeed must be acknowledged to be as great a Miracle, or greater than if the Apostles had spoken so many different Languages: but this seems to be a very groundless, and unreasonable conceit, and very contrary to this relation of this miraculous gift, and to all the Circumstances of it. For the Text expressly says, that *They spake with other tongues*, that is, in Languages different from their Mother Tongue, in which they spake before, otherwise they could not be called *other*, or *new tongues*. And 1 Cor. 12. 28. the Apostle, among the several Gifts which God had bestowed upon the Church, mentions *Diversity of tongues*, which had not been true, if the Apostles had all spoken in one Language. And ver. 30. he makes a difference between the gift of speaking several

Lan-

Languages, and interpreting things spoken in divers Tongues. *Do all, says* **Serm. 9.**

he, speak with tongues? do all interpret?

But if what the Apostles had spoken in one Language, had been heard by those of several Nations in their own Language, there had been no need of interpretation. And *Chap. 14. Ver.*

2. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God;

for no man beareth him; that is, no Man understandeth what he saith, God only knows it; whereas if they heard every one in their own Language, they all understood what was said. And, ver. 13. Wherefore let him

that speaketh in an unknown tongue, pray that he may interpret. But what need

of that, if every one heard what was spoken in his own tongue? And, ver.

16. the Apostle says, that He that was unlearned, could not say Amen at the

giving of thanks in an unknown tongue; because he understood not what was said.

And, ver. 27. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at

the most by three, and that by course, and let one interpret. All which plainly

contradicts that foolish conceit, that the Miracle of the Gift of Tongues

was not in the Speakers, but the
 Vol. 10. Hearers.

That which seems to have given occasion to this error, was, that they could not understand how any Man should at the same time speak divers Languages: but there is no ground at all to suppose so; because it is not said, that any of the Apostles did at the same time speak several Languages; (which is impossible) but that the Apostles spake several Languages, so that the several Nations then present heard some or other of the Apostles speaking in their own Language. So that to trouble our selves no farther about this idle conceit, the Miracle was not, that every one of the Apostles did speak several Languages at the same time; but that they all spake on the sudden Languages which they had never learnt before; so that the People of several Nations, that were then present, did then hear some or other of the Apostles speaking to them in their own Language.

Having thus explained the several Expressions and Passages in the Text,

I come now to speak to the main Argument contained in them, viz. This Miraculous Gift which was conferred on the Apostles, of speaking all on the sudden the Languages of all Nations, with whom they had occasion to converse, tho' they had never learned them before.

And in the handling of this Argument, these following particulars will be fit to be considered, and enquired into by us.

First, The strangeness of this Gift, or Miracle.

Secondly, The clear Evidence of this Miracle, that it was real, and that there was no manner of imposture or deceit in it, nor could there be any suspicion of it.

Thirdly, The wonderful effect of it immediately, and upon the spot, upon the very day, and in the place where it was first wrought.

Fourthly,

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Fourthly, The great necessity and usefulness of it.

Fifthly, The Reason why it was the first of all the miraculous Gifts, and so visibly conferr'd upon the Apostles, before any of the rest.

Sixthly, and lastly, I shall enquire, whether there be any necessity now, and consequently any probability of the renewing of this Miracle, in order to the Conversion of the Infidel World, and those many and great Nations in the remoter Parts of the World, which do still continue Strangers and Enemies to the Christian Religion.

First, The strangeness of this Gift or Miracle. It was of that nature, that the like was never known in the World, neither before nor since the first Ages of Christianity, upon any occasion whatsoever; nor can we well imagine any other sort of Miracle that could probably affect Men more, and strike them with greater Wonder and Admiration, and have been a more sensible

sensible Demonstration of a Divine Power and Presence accompanying the Apostles, than to see and hear them all on the sudden perfectly to speak so many Languages, which they had never learned before. *Serm. 9.*

Especially if all the Circumstances of the thing be duly weighed and considered; that they who pretended to be endowed with this Gift, were not Strangers newly arrived and come to *Jerusalem*, who before they came thither, might possibly by great study and pains have attained to the knowledge and skill of several Languages, (each of them suppose two Languages apiece) and have craftily combined together to impose upon the World, by the pretence and ostentation of such a Miracle: but these Persons were known to all that dwelt in *Jerusalem*, and had for a long time been taken notice of, as the Disciples and Followers of *Jesus*, who was lately crucified among them; their Education was known, and the meanness of their Condition, that they were simple and illiterate Persons, who never had the advantage or opportunity

Vol. 10. mity of attaining to this Skill in an ordinary way; and therefore it must be concluded to have been an extraordinary and supernatural Gift.

Besides that this Miracle, was very publickly wrought, and the noise of it in a few hours drew together the Strangers of several Nations, who being become Profelytes of the Jewish Religion, dwelt at Jerusalem; these all coming together, upon the noise and fame of this Miracle, found it to be true, and, as appears from the History, were so well satisfied of the reality of it, that a very great number, upon the occasion of it, and upon that very Day, became Profelytes to the Christian Religion, and joyned themselves to the Apostles and their Followers, (who were then but few in number) and were presently admitted into the Christian Church by Baptism, the usual Ceremony of admitting Profelytes among the Jews. This was a present and great Effect, and is a great Evidence and Confirmation of the truth and reality of the thing: but this I shall have occasion to speak more fully to, when I come to

a great and strange Miracle.

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to the *fifth* Particular which I proposed.

Serm. 9.

I add farther, that our Saviour seems to have reckoned this as one of the greatest of Miracles, and therefore to have reserved it, for an Instance and Demonstration of the glorious Power which he was invested withal, after his Ascension into Heaven; as may very probably be collected from that Declaration and Promise which he made to his Apostles, a little before his departure from them, *John 14. 12. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father, that is, in order to the sending of the Holy Ghost, to endow them with power from on high, to qualifie them for the publishing of the Gospel, which they were forbidden to enter upon 'till this Promise was made good to them. But what were these greater works, which he here promiseth to enable them to do, after he was gone to his Father? For he expressely promiseth, that they should not only do the*
† *Works*

~~~~~ Works which he had done, but greater  
 Vol. 10, er works than those; and what could  
 these be? Our Saviour had wrought  
 many and great Miracles almost in all  
 kinds imaginable; he had cast out  
 Devils, and healed all sorts of Infirmities  
 and Diseases; he had changed Nature,  
 by turning Water into Wine, and had stopt  
 the Course of it, by stilling the Winds and  
 the Sea by his Word; and he had raised the Dead;  
 and now what work could that be which  
 was greater than any of these? Even that  
 which I am speaking of, the miraculous Power  
 of speaking all Languages, without learning them;  
 a thing never heard of in the World before.  
 And this was the first sensible Effect of the  
 coming of the Holy Ghost upon them, the first  
 miraculous Power with which he endowed his  
 Apostles, after he was ascended into Heaven,  
 and gone to his Father; an evident Testimony  
 of the Glory and Power which he was invested  
 withal, after he was taken up into Heaven,  
 and sat down at the right hand of God, to  
 signify both the Honour and the Power which  
 was conferred upon him, in that he enabled

enabled his Apostles, when he was absent from them, to do that, which

*Serm. 9.*

whilst he was present with them he had never enabled them to do, nor ever did himself ; all which tends to advance this Miracle, and to shew the greatness and strangeness of it above any other. And unless we fix it upon this Miracle, it will be hard, if not impossible to give a good account of the accomplishing of that solemn Promise of our Saviour to his Disciples, after he should be gone to his Father, that is, after his Ascension into Heaven, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father.* Now what miraculous work can be instanced in, that was done by the Apostles, and was greater than any our Saviour did, when he was upon Earth, but this only of speaking all Languages on the sudden without ever having learned them ; which Consideration alone does confirm me past all doubt, that our Saviour in this Promise meant the miraculous Gift of Tongues, which was the first Gift that was conferred

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upon

upon them, after he was ascended  
 Vol. 10. into Heaven, and gone to his Father.  
 I proceed,

*Secondly*, To consider the clear Evidence of this Miracle, that it was real, and that there could be no suspicion of any manner of Imposture and Deceit in it.

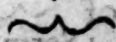
It was publickly wrought before many Witnesses, and those the most competent of all other, because they were highly prejudiced against the Apostles, and great Enemies to them, as being the Disciples of him whom they had so lately crucified as an Impostour. They gave clear proof of this miraculous Power in the presence of great multitudes of several Nations, who heard them every one speaking to them in their own Language: and besides the present Demonstration of this miraculous Gift, to those of several Nations that dwelt at *Jerusalem*, they gave Evidence of it in all places and Nations whither they went preaching the Gospel; so that this Miracle accompanied and continued with them, till the Gospel



was made known to a great part of the then known World, and lasted *Serm 9.* for a whole Age, and till there was no farther need and use of it.

But it may be said, that tho' this was sufficiently evident to them that dwelt at *Jerusalem*, who knew the Apostles, and the Circumstances of their Education; yet it was not so credible to others, who lived remote from *Jerusalem*, and neither knew the Apostles, nor the manner of their Education, nor were Witnesses of the miraculous rise and beginning of this Gift of Tongues. These could only hear them speak in their Language; but whether their knowledge of this Language had been acquired by study, or was supernatural and infused, for this they had only common Fame, and the Apostles own word, which may seem to have been but a slender Evidence for a thing so strange. And so it must be acknowledged to be, of the Apostles Affirmation, that this Gift was supernaturally conferred upon them, had not been otherwise countenanced and supported; as it was in a very extraordinary and remarkable

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 markable manner, by their being en-  
Vol. 10. dowed with a Power to work other  
Miracles of all kinds, which they did  
every where, and very frequently upon  
on all occasions. And this was suffi-  
cient to give credit to what they  
affirmed, concerning this supernatu-  
ral Gift of Tongues: For when they  
saw them work other Miracles of all  
sorts, they had no reason to doubt of  
the Truth and Reality of this Miracu-  
lous Gift of Tongues, which was abun-  
dantly confirmed by the other Miracu-  
lous Powers with which they  
were endowed. So that the Gospel  
where ever it came, carried its own  
Evidence along with it, and was con-  
firmed by the very manner of its con-  
veyance and delivery; and well might  
Men entertain it as a Divine Doctrine  
when the very Manner and Means  
whereby it was conveyed to the  
World, was so strange and astonishing  
a Miracle, as was never wrought in  
World before, upon any occasion  
whatsoever. And this will yet be  
farther evident, if we consider  
the

*Third Place, the wonderful Effect* Serm. 9.  
which this Miracle immediately had  
upon the spot, and on the very day  
when it first appeared.

It had so glaring an Evidence, and  
carried such conviction in it, that the  
Doctrine which they who were en-  
dowed with Miraculous Gifts did  
Preach, was immediately received and  
entertained by a very great number of  
the Hearers, who, upon the conviction  
of this great Miracle, became Prose-  
lytes to this new Religion, and were  
solemnly admitted to the Profession of  
it by Baptism; as we read, *ver. 41.*  
of this *Chapter*; where, after St. Peter  
had made an end of his Sermon to  
the People upon this occasion, it is  
said, *Then they that gladly received his*  
*word were baptized; and the same day*  
*there were added unto them about three*  
*thousand souls.* Here was a mighty  
Effect, *three thousand* converted at one  
Sermon, being convinced by the Evi-  
dence of this Miracle. And it was a  
very immediate effect; for it is said,  
*that the same day three thousand were*  
*added to the Church.* Here was an Ef-  
fect

Vol. 10. *fect proportionable to the greatness and strangeness of its Cause; a mighty Victory gained over the Prejudices of men, and the Powers of darkness, by the light and conviction of this Miracle, which our Saviour seems to have kept in reserve for this great occasion, when his Gospel and Religion was to be first Publish'd, and to make its solemn entrance into the World. Here was a large portion of first-Fruits, and a great earnest of that Spiritual Harvest, which the Apostles had began to Reap; of which the first-Fruits among the Jews were a Type: for their Harvest also was at this very Season of the Year; as I noted before.*

*Fourthly, We will consider the great Usefulness of this Miraculous Gift, for the more easie and speedy conveyance of the Doctrine of Christianity, and the diffusing and spreading the knowledge of it in the World; and this if we consider it, not as a Miracle but only as a Means so very convenient to this purpose, that, by the Advantage of it, the Gospel made a greater progress in the space of a few Years*



Years, than in humane probability could have been made without it, in many Ages; and it was spread farther in thirty Years, than could in reason have been expected in fifteen hundred, by natural and ordinary means. *So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed*; being carried on in so powerful and supernatural a manner. Serm. 9.

*Fifthly*, We will consider, why this was the first Miraculous Gift, conferred upon the Apostles more visibly, and before any of the rest. The other Miraculous Powers were only visible in their Effects; but this was visible, not only in the Effects of it, but likewise in the Cause and the Manner of its being conferr'd. *For the holy spirit rested upon them, in the form of fiery cloven tongues*; to signify not only the diversity of Languages which they should be enabled to speak, but the quick and piercing efficacy of their Speech. The Reason of all which seems to be, because this was the greatest of all Miracles, and therefore fit to be first. For as I shewed before, this, in the Judgment of our Saviour (who best understood the dif-

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ferent degrees of Miracles) this was greater than any of those which he himself in his life time had wrought; and likewise because this Miracle was of greater use than any of the rest, and more necessary to the effectual discharge of their Apostolical Office, and to the easie success and more speedy effect of it. For by this Miraculous gift more especially, the Apostles were, as it were, Consecrated to their Office, and made capable to discharge it, with ease and effect; their Office being to publish the Doctrine of the Gospel to the World, and to be Witnesses of our Saviour's Resurrection from the dead, which was to be the great Confirmation of his Doctrine; neither of which they could with any probability of effect and success, have done without this Miraculous Gift. For what slow progress must they have made, and how little could they have advanced in this work, had they either done all by interpreters, or been put to have learned the Languages of the several Nations, to which they had been to Preach, before they could have Publish'd this Doctrine among them?

The

The *Jews*, who were very zealous of their Religion, (which was likewise from God, and was attested by Miracles) upon occasion of several Calamities which befell them, and carried them into Captivity, were dispersed in several Nations; and yet how slowly, for want of this Gift, did they gain Profelytes to their Religion? And how few did they convert to it in the space of four or five hundred Years? By which we may judge how little Christianity would have gained upon the World, had it not been countenanced and assisted from Heaven in this miraculous manner. I come now to the

*Sixth*, And last thing which I proposed to enquire into; namely, Whether there be any Necessity now, and consequently Probability of the renewing of this Miracle, in order to the Conversion of Infidels, and the gaining over of those many and great Nations in the remoter parts of the World, who are still strangers and enemies to the Christian Religion.

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That which would induce a Man to hope well in this case, is, that without some such Miraculous Gift, there is little or no probability of the Conversion of Infidel Nations; unless God should be pleased by some unexpected means, to bring over to Christianity some powerful Prince, of great Reputation for his Wisdom and Virtue, who by the influence of his Example, and by his Favour and Countenance, might give advantages to the planting of it among his Subjects. And yet considering the inveterate and violent prejudices of men against a new Religion, such an attempt would, in all human probability, be more likely to end in the ruine of the Prince, and the overturning of his Government, than in the Establishment of a new Religion. Of which kind there have been several Instances very remarkable in *Japan* and *Æthiopia*, and perhaps in places and times nearer to us, and within our own memory.

But if any such thing should be attempted by private Persons, the undertaking



dertaking would meet with such insuperable Obstacles, not only from the prejudices and interest of men, but from the great difficulty of gaining Languages so different from our own, that it must in all likelihood have a very slow progress, and at last fall to the ground, for want of proper and effectual means to carry it on. For tho' the Morality of the Christian Religion be admirable, and very apt to recommend it self to the unbiass'd and impartial Reason of Mankind; (if any such thing were any where to be found) yet \* the death of the Son of God is such a stumbling-block, as is very hard for human Reason to get over. Of which the *Jesuits in China* were so sensible, that, according to their usual sincerity, they thought best to conceal that most essential part of the Christian Doctrine, which relates to the Death and Sufferings of our Saviour. So I am sure St. Paul took it to be, when he tells the *Corinthians*, that *He determined to know nothing among them, save Jesus Christ, and him Crucified.* This it seems he looked upon as the most material and valuable part of the Christian Religion, and

\* See  
Serm. V.  
of this  
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Vol. 10. and of greatest consequence to be known by us. But the *Jesuits* it seems thought otherwise, and therefore concealed it from their Converts. For which most shameful and unchristian Practice, several of them were very lately under Prosecution, at Rome.

\* See the  
same Dis-  
course.

Besides all this, \* the matters of fact upon which the truth of Christianity does necessarily depend, as the Birth, and Life, and Miracles, and Death, and Resurrection of our Blessed Saviour, and his visible Ascension into Heaven; I say these matters of fact, tho' we have a most credible History and Relation of them brought down to us, do not carry so strong and sensible a conviction in them, to those who never heard of them before, as to be able to conquer and bear down a violent prejudice: Nor is it in reason to be expected, that these things should easily be admitted by those, who are utter strangers to our History of former times, and consequently not fit to judge of what value they are.

I speak not this to discourage any *Serm. 9.*  
from using their best endeavours to  
propagate our Religion among Infidels, where the Providence of God  
opens a door, and gives any opportunity for it. Among the many bad  
things that have been done in the  
Church of Rome, there is one thing  
very much to their Honour, that they  
have been at very great charge and  
pains in their *Missions* for the Conversion  
of Infidel Nations, especially in  
the Eastern parts of the World, to  
that which they account the true  
Christian Religion. And if the matter  
had been as honestly managed, as  
I hope it was piously intended, and  
their Charity and Zeal had been equally  
warm for the Conversion of  
the Northern Infidels, where there is  
nothing to be met with but Frost and  
Cold, as it hath been for the Conversion  
of those parts of the World where  
Gold and Spices abound, it had deserved  
great praise, notwithstanding  
their mistakes in Religion, and the  
great mixture of Errors and Corruptions  
in it.

†  
And

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And it is no small reproach to the Protestant Religion, that there hath not appeared an equal Zeal among us for this purpose ; and that to our unwearied endeavours to promote the interest of Trade in Foreign parts, there hath not been joyned a like zeal and industry for the propagating of the Christian Religion ; which might surely be attempted, with more than ordinary Advantage, in those places where we have so free a Commerce.

It is not good for men to be confident, where they are not certain ; but  
 \* See the \* it seems to me not improbable, if  
 fore-cited the conversion of Infidels to Christia-  
 Disc. nity were sincerely and vigorously attempted by men of honest Minds, who would make it their business to instruct those who are strangers to our Religion in the pure Doctrine of Christianity, free from all human mixtures and corruptions ; it seems to me in this case, not at all improbable, that God would extraordinarily countenance such an attempt, by all fitting assistance, as he did the first publica-  
 tion



*for converting Infidel Nations.*

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tion of the Gospel. For as the Wisdom of God is not wont to do that which is superfluous, so neither is it wanting in that which is necessary. And from what hath been said upon this Argument, the necessity seems to be much the same that it was at first.

Serm. 9.

I would not be mistaken in what I have said about this matter; I do not deliver it as positive, but only as probable Divinity, no-wise contrary to Scripture, and very agreeable to Reason.

Thus much may suffice to have spoken concerning this Miraculous Gift of Tongues conferred upon the Apostles at the time of *Pentecost*.

SER-

ion of the Gospel. For as the Will  
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Thus much may suffice to have  
spoken concerning this Miraculous  
Gift of Tongues conferred upon the  
Apostles at the time of Ascension.

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# SERMON X.

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Of the coming of the Holy Ghost,  
as an Advocate for Christ.

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JOHN XVI. 7, 8.

*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: But if I depart, I will send him unto you: And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.*

**T**HESE Words are part of our Saviour's last Sermon, which he made to his Disciples a little before he left the World: And this Sermon is only recorded by this Evangelist,  
† who

who hath set it down at large in the  
Vol. 10. 14, 15, and 16. Chap. of his Gospel.  
The main scope of it is, first to per-  
wade them to the Obedience and  
Practice of that Holy Doctrine, which  
he had delivered to them, while he  
was with them; and then because  
their Hearts were full of sorrow at  
the thoughts of his departure from  
them, knowing that for his sake they  
should be ill treated by the World,  
he arms them against these discour-  
agements; he promiseth, not long  
after his departure from them, to  
send down his Holy Spirit upon them  
in Miraculous Powers and Gifts, as  
a testimony to the World of the  
Truth of his Doctrine, and a clear  
Conviction that he came from God,  
Ver. 26. of the 15. Chap. *But when  
the Comforter (or rather the Advocate) is  
come, whom I will send unto you from  
the Father, even the Spirit of truth,  
which proceeds from the Father; he  
shall testifie of me: and ye also shall bear  
witness, because ye have been with me  
from the beginning. The Testimony  
which the Holy Spirit should give to  
them, should give credit and strength  
to their Testimony.*

And



And this consideration he makes use of, to comfort them under the sad thoughts of his Departure, because his Absence would be abundantly recompensed to them, by the coming of the Holy Ghost, which could not be till he had left the World; because this *Comforter*, or *Advocate*, was to be sent in his name, to come upon his account, and in his stead, to supply his absence. So that tho' they were greatly troubled at the thoughts of his departure, there was no cause for it, when all things were considered; for in truth it was for their Advantage, that he should depart from them, *Ver. the 6. of this Chap.* But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you, that I go away: for if I go not away the *Comforter* will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you: And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of Righteousness, and of Judgment.

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From,

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From which Words, I shall consider these two things.

*First, The Necessity of Christ's leaving the World, in order to the coming of the Holy Ghost. If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you : but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

*Secondly, The happy Consequence and Effect of the coming of the Holy Ghost. And when he is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, and of Righteousness, and of Judgment. I shall as briefly as I can explain both these.*

*First, The Necessity of Christ's leaving the World, in order to the coming of the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth ; It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. That it is the Holy Ghost which is here spoken of, and*

that as a *Person* and not as a *Quality*, or *Power*, or *Virtue*, is plain from our Saviour's Discourse all along this Sermon, in which he is spoken of, under the notion of a *Person*, and that in as plain and expresse terms, as Christ himself is. As the Father sent Christ, so is he said to send the Holy Ghost; as Christ is said to depart, so the Holy Ghost is said to come; as Christ is call'd an *Advocate*, so the Holy Ghost is said to be another *Advocate*; Christ our Advocate to plead our Cause with God, he Christ's Advocate, to Plead his Cause with the World, Ch. 14. 16, 17. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. And who is that? Even the spirit of truth. And, Chap. 15. 26. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth. And in the Verse immediately after the Text, Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come. But expressly, Chap. 14. 26. he is called the Holy Ghost. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom

whom the Father will send in my name,  
 Vol. 10. he shall teach you all things.

All the difficulty is concerning the word *παρακλητος*, which our Translation renders *the Comforter*. 'Tis true indeed, that the Verb *παρακαλεῖν* is of a very large and unlimited Signification; it sometimes signifies *to Comfort*, very frequently *to Preach, Teach, and Exhort*, and sometimes *to Plead as an Advocate the Cause of another*. And this seems to be the proper notion of the word *παρακλητος*, in this place, *the Advocate or Patron of a Cause*, one that Pleads for the party accused. And in this sense, and no other, Christ is called *our παρακλητος*, or *Advocate with the Father*, 1 John 2. 1. *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous*. And as Christ is *our Advocate with the Father in Heaven*; so the Spirit is *Christ's Advocate here on Earth*, and pleads his Cause with the World. And it is very observable, that this very word *Paraclete*, tho' it be not an Hebrew, but a Greek word, is frequently used both by the *Chaldee Paraphrast*, and other



other Jewish Writers, in this sense of *an Advocate*. And that this Notion of *Ser. 10.* the word agrees best with this place, I shall clearly shew, when I come to the *Second Head* of my Discourse; namely, To shew the happy Consequence and Effect of the coming of the Holy Ghost, viz. The Convincing of the World, how injuriously they had dealt with Christ, and the clear Vindication of his Innocency, which is the proper Office and Work of an Advocate.

Having thus fixt the notion of the word *παρακλητος* in this place, we will now enquire, what Necessity, or Expediency there was, that Christ should leave the World, in order to the coming of the Holy Ghost. *It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Advocate will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

And of this I shall give an account in these *two Particulars*.

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I. From the method of the Divine Dispensation, in the Redemption and Salvation of Man by Jesus Christ.

II. From the Rational suitability, and congruity of this Dispensation.

I. From the Method of the Divine Dispensation, in the Redemption and Salvation of Man by Jesus Christ. Thus the Scripture tells us, that God in his infinite Wisdom had designed and ordered things, that the Son of God should come into the World, and live in a mean and abject condition; that he should be *despised and rejected of men*, persecuted and put to Death; and that as a Reward of all this Submission and Suffering, he should be raised again from the dead, taken up into Heaven, and placed *on the right hand of the Majesty on high*; and that in the Triumph of his Ascension, he should *lead captive* Death and Hell, and all the Powers of darkness; and being entred into the

*that the Holy Ghost might come.*

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the highest Heavens, and *set on the right hand of God*, as an act of Power Ser. 10.

and Royalty, he should send down his Holy Spirit in miraculous Gifts upon men, for the Conviction of the World, that the Doctrine which he commanded his Apostles to publish to all Nations was from God. And therefore the Apostle St. Paul tells us expressly, that the Communication of these Gifts of the Spirit was the proper Effect and Consequent of our Lord's Exaltation, and one of the first acts of Royalty which he exercised, after he was possess of his glorious Kingdom. *Eph. 4. 7, 8.* where, speaking of the various Gifts of the Spirit, *Unto every one of us*, saith he, *is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.* For which he cites the Prediction of David, *Psal. 68. 18.* *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.* And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers. So that we plainly see, that this was the Dispensation of God, and the Method which his Wisdom

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 Vol. 10. had pitched upon, that our Lord
 taken up into glory, and then send
 down the Holy Ghost, in the plenti-
 ful effusions of miraculous gifts. So
 this Evangelist expressly tells us in a-
 nother place, which gives great light
 to this Text, *John 7. 39. But this*
(says he) spake he of the Spirit, which
they that believe on him should receive:
for the Holy Ghost was not yet given,
because Jesus was not yet glorified.
 Implying, that according to the Divine
 disposal, it was ordered first, that
 Christ should be glorified; and being
 invested in his Kingdom and Glory,
 that then he should do Acts of Grace,
 and like a King at his Coronation,
 scatter and dispense his gifts among
 men, by sending down his Holy Spi-
 rit among them. And accordingly we
 find St. Peter, *Acts 2.* after that the
 Holy Ghost came down upon them,
 giving this account of it, *ver. 32,*
33. This Jesus hath God raised up,
whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore
being by the right hand of God exalted,
and having received of the Father the
promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed
 forth

that the Holy Ghost might come.

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forth this which ye now see and hear ; ~~~~~
meaning the Gift of Tongues; so that **Ser. 10**
he resolves it into the Dispensation
of God, who had thus designed
and ordered things. And therefore
in the

II. Place, I shall shew, that this
Dispensation is very congruous and
suitable to the Divine Wisdom. For
as it was convenient, that the Son of
God should assume our Nature, and
come into the World, and dwell a-
mong us, that he might reform Man-
kind, by the purity of his Doctrine,
and the Pattern of his Holy Life; and
likewise that he should suffer Death,
for the expiation of sin, in such a
manner, as might not only advance
the Mercy, but assert and vindicate
the Holiness of God, and testify his
great hatred and displeasure against
sin; so likewise after he had thus
abased himself, to the lowest degree
of Meanness and Suffering, it was
very suitable to the Divine Goodness,
to reward such great Sufferings with
great Glory, by raising him from the
dead, and taking him up into Heaven;
but

Vol. 10. but it was not fit, when he had left the World, that the great Work for which he came into it, should be given over, and come to nothing, for want of effectual Prosecution, without any Fruit and Effect of so much Sweat and Blood. And therefore, tho' it had pleased the Lord to bruise him and put him to grief, as the Prophet expresseth it, yet the Divine Wisdom had so order'd things, that after he had made his soul an offering for sin, he should see his seed, and prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hands, that he should see some fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, as the Prophet foretels, *Esa. 53. 10.* So that as it was expedient, that he should die and depart this life; so it was also requisite afterwards, that he who had begun this great and good work of the Redemption and Salvation of Man, should take care to have it still prosecuted and carried on; and accordingly, when he was ascended into Heaven, he still promotes the same Design, *per vicariam viam spiritus sancti*, as *Tertullian* calls it, by sending the Holy

that the Holy Ghost might come.

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Holy Ghost, as his Deputy, for the managing of this work, and the propagating and establishing of that Religion which he had planted in the World. Ser. 10.

God foresaw that the greatest part of the Jewish Nation would reject Christ and his Doctrine, and that they would put him to Death, as a Deceiver and Impostor; and because it was expedient, that there should be such an expiatory Sacrifice for sin, and that *one man should die for all men*, God was willing to permit his Son to be thus dishonourably and unjustly treated, and *by wicked hands to be crucified and slain*; because he knew very well, how to make the malice of men subservient to his own gracious purpose and design; but yet he was not willing, that so much Innocency and Goodness should always lie under this reproach, from which if he had not been vindicated, the design of the Gospel had fallen to the ground, and presently come to nothing; and therefore as a Reward of his Obedience and Submission to the Will of
God,

~ God, in these dreadful Sufferings, in
 Vel. 10. this cruel and dishonourable usage,
 God furnish'd him with this means of
 vindicating himself and his Doctrine;
 he gave him Power to send his Holy
 Spirit into the World, who should
 distribute miraculous Gifts among his
 Apostles and Followers, that so both
 he and his Doctrine might be effectually
 vindicated to the World, and a
 way made for the more speedy
 spreading and propagating of it.

So that we plainly see, that the
 Wisdom of God had so ordered this
 whole Dispensation, that every part
 of it, the Birth, and Life, and Death,
 and Resurrection, and Ascension of
 our Lord, and the sending of the
 Holy Ghost, they are all subser-
 vient to one another, and to the
 whole design, viz. The Reforma-
 tion and Salvation of Mankind.

I have done with the *first* thing I
 propounded, the Necessity of Christ's
 leaving the World, in order to the
 coming of the Holy Ghost. I shall
 now proceed to the

Second

Second thing I proposed, the happy Consequence and Effects of the coming of the Holy Ghost. *When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* There is a great difficulty in these Words, and therefore I shall endeavour, as well as I can, to explain them, and then draw some useful Inferences from the main Doctrine contained in them.

For the explication of them. *And when he, that is the Holy Ghost, the Advocate mentioned before, shall come,* that is, when the promise of the Father concerning the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles shall be accomplish'd, *he shall reprove the world;* the word is *ἐλεγε*, which I think may much more properly be rendered *convince*, *He shall convince the world.* And so it is used by this Evangelist, *John 8. 46. Which of you says our Saviour, convinceth me of sin?* The very Phrase used in the Text, *He shall convince the world of sin.* And the same word is also used in the same

same sense by St. Paul, *Tit. i. 9.*
 Vol. 10. ἐλέγχει ἀνυπόκριτας, *to convince gain-*
sayers. And this certainly is much
 more agreeable to the scope of this
 place. For tho' *to reprove the world of*
sin, be a current expression; yet *to*
reprove the world of righteousness and of
judgment, are very hard Phrases, and
 I doubt, not intelligible; but to con-
 vince an Adversary, or to satisfy a
 Court, of the falshood of the accusa-
 tion and charge brought against the
 Party accused, that is, to vindicate
 and justify him in his Cause, this
 is the proper act of an *Advocate*.

So that the great End of the coming
 of the Holy Ghost, who is here called
the Advocate, is *to convince the world.*
He shall convince the world, that is,
 both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who joyned
 in their enmity against Christ, and
 agreed to put him to death. In these
 three points, concerning *sin*, and *righte-*
ousness, and *judgment*. The expression
 is short, and somewhat obscure, and
 seems (as *Grotius* and other learned
 men have not improbably thought)

by the coming of the Holy Ghost.

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to allude to the three sorts of Causes
and Actions among the Jews.

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In the *first*, to publick actions concerning Criminal Matters, among which was the case of believing or rejecting Prophets. *He shall convince the world of sin, because they believed not in me*; that is, he shall convince the World that I was a true Prophet sent from God, and no Impostor; and consequently, that they were guilty of a great Contempt of God, and a horrible Murder, in putting me to Death.

In the *second*, there seems to be an allusion to that sort of private actions, which referr'd to the vindicating of Innocency from false Testimony and Accusation, which are called by the name of *Righteousness*. *He shall convince the world of Righteousness*.

In the *third*, to that sort of actions, which referr'd to the vindication and punishment of injuries, by way of Retaliation upon him that did the injury, and which are called *reproaches*,
or

or judgment. He shall convince the world
 Vol. 10. of judgment, because the Prince of this
 world is judged.

But to explain these things more particularly.

1. He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me; that is, of the great sin they were guilty of, in rejecting this great Prophet, and condemning him as a Seducer and Impostor. And of this they should remarkably be convinc'd, when they should see the Predictions of Christ fulfilled, particularly that of sending the Holy Ghost; and of that terrible vengeance which should afterwards be executed on the Jewish Nation, for rejecting the Son of God. The first of these we find eminently fulfilled upon the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, *Acts* 2. For when the Apostles by a sudden inspiration spake with other Tongues the Jews, and Proselytes, who saw and heard them, were very much amazed at it, *ver.* 7. and from this miraculous Power of the Holy Ghost so visible upon them, St. Peter takes

takes occasion to convince the *Jews*, of their great sin in rejecting the *Messias*, and putting him to death, *ver. 32, 33.* This *Jesus*, saith he, hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses; wherefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father, the promise of the Holy-Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. From whence he concludes, *ver. 36.* Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same *Jesus*, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. That is, by this you may be convinced, that he whom you Crucified as a false Prophet, was the true *Messias*. Upon this we find, *ver. 37.* that When the *Jews* heard this, they were pricked at their hearts, and said unto Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, men and brethren, What shall we do to be saved? Thus you see the first effect which our Saviour foretold of the coming of the Holy Ghost, fulfilled in a most eminent manner; for upon this Sermon three thousand of the *Jews*, being convinced of their great sin, in not

X

believing

306 *The world convinc'd of Righteousness,*
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Vol. 10. *believing on him, were baptized in his name.*

II. *He shall convince the world of righteousness ; that is, of the innocency of that holy and just Person, whom they had condemned as a Malefactor. Of righteousness, because I go to the Father ; that is, this shall be an Evidence to the World of my innocency of those Crimes, with which I was charged ; that I am taken up into Heaven, and seated at the right hand of God, where I shall remain for ever, out of the reach of their malice and injury. Because I go to the Father and ye see me no more ; that is, I shall be there, where their malice cannot reach me. For so he tells the Pharisees, when they came to apprehend him, John 7. 33, 34. Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me: Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me ; and where I am, thither ye cannot come.*

And this vindication of his innocency was begun by the Miracles which immediately followed his Death,  
upon

upon which *The Centurion glorified* God, saying, *Certainly this was the Son of God*, as *St. Matthew* hath it; or, as *St. Luke*, *This was a righteous man*, *Luke 23. 47.* And not only the *Centurion*, but *all the people*, ver. 48. And *all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.* But the great vindication of his innocency was his Resurrection, which delivered him from that unjust Sentence of death which was past upon him, by raising him up to life again. And this is particularly ascribed to the Holy Ghost, *Rom. 1. 4.* And was mightily demonstrated to be the Son of God, by the spirit of holiness, in his resurrection from the dead. Especially if we consider, that he was afterwards taken up visibly into Heaven, and there invested with Royal Power and Dignity; of which he gave plentiful Evidence, in the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, poured forth upon the Apostles: which was a standing Demonstration to the World of his Innocency and Righteousness, since God had taken him up to himself,

*The world convinc'd of Judgment,*  
 self, and set him at his own right hand,  
 Vol. 10. and committed all power to him, in hea-  
 ven and earth.

III. He shall convince the world of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged. He that usurped the Authority of God in the World, and by his instruments had procured Christ to be condemned, as a counterfeit King, is himself dethroned and condemned; *The Prince of this world is judged.* He that thought to have destroyed the Son of God, by putting him to death, is by this very means destroyed himself. So the Apostle tells us, *Heb. 2. 14.* that *Christ through his death*, that is, upon occasion of his death, and his Resurrection from the dead consequent upon it, *hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil.*

But most remarkably was *the Prince of this world judged and cast out*, when after he had so long usurped the name and worship of God in the World, he was by that mighty Power of the Spirit of God, which accompanied  
 the



the Preaching of the Gospel, thrown out of his Kingdom; and wherever the Doctrine of Christ came, the Idolatry of the World was not able to stand before it, but fell down, like *Dagon before the Ark*. And that this is the meaning of *Judgment* here, is plain from the same Evangelist, *Chap. 12. 31, 32. Now is the Judgment of this world; now shall the Prince of this world be cast out. And if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me.* Where our Saviour explains the *Judgment of this world*, by the casting out *Satan* out of that Power and Authority which he had usurped in the Heathen World by his Idolatrous Worship: And therefore our Saviour foretels, that *when he was lifted up from the earth*, that is, after he was crucified, and raised from the dead, and taken up into Heaven, *he would draw all men to him*; that is, his Religion should prevail wonderfully in the World, and be entertained in all Nations. And this was most remarkably accomplisht, by the wonderful progress of the Gospel, and speedy downfal of Idolatry in the

World, not by might, nor by power, but by the spirit of the Lord. The acknowledgment of Porphyry, that bitter Enemy of Christianity, as it is reported to us by Eusebius, is very remarkable, *That since one Jesus began to be worshipp'd, they found no publick benefit from their Gods; their Miracles and their Oracles ceased.* This our Saviour foresaw, and foretold, when he appointed and sent forth the seventy Disciples to Preach the Gospel, *Luke 10. 18. I beheld Satan, like Lightning to fall from Heaven,* to express to us the sudden demolishing of his Kingdom, and the quick and speedy overthrow of Idolatry in the World. And thus I have explained, as briefly as I could, this difficult passage, concerning the Holy Ghost's convincing the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

I shall only draw *two or three* Inferences from what hath been delivered, and so conclude.

I. We have great Reason to adore the Wisdom and Goodness of God

in the dispensation of the Gospel; that by the sending down of his Holy Spirit, to endow the first Publishers of this Heavenly Doctrine, with such miraculous Power and Gifts, he hath given such abundant Testimony to the Truth of our Religion, and such firm grounds for our Faith to rely upon. Had God left the Christian Religion to have been propagated only by its own rational force upon the Minds of men, what a slow progress would it in all probability have made? How little belief would the Apostles naked Testimony of our Lord's Resurrection from the dead, without any other demonstration or proof, have gained while they were alive, much less after their death? How unable would their Doctrine, destitute of Divine Testimony, as well as of all human Advantages, have been to have contested with the Lusts and Interests of men, the Wit of the Philosophers, and the Power of the Princes of this World, which all set themselves against it? How could it, with any hope of success, have encountred the Malice of men

Vol. 10. and Devils, which was so active and  
by all possible violence, and  
by all imaginable arts to root it out  
of the World? Had the Apostles of  
our Lord only gone forth, in the  
strength of their own Interest and  
Eloquence, (which in poor and un-  
learned men must needs be very  
small) how little could they have  
contributed to the carrying on so  
great and difficult a work? Nay had  
they not been supported, and born  
up in their Spirits by a mighty strength  
above their own, had not their Com-  
mission been sealed by the miracu-  
lous Power of the Holy Ghost, which  
upon all occasions shew'd forth it  
self in them, to the wonder and  
astonishment of men, and was a testi-  
mony from Heaven to them, that  
they were the Ambassadors of God  
to men, specially impowered and  
Commissioned by him for that work;  
they could not but have been dis-  
couraged by the opposition and diffi-  
culties they met withal, and they  
might with *Moses* have declined  
the service, and desired God to send  
his Message by others, that were fit-  
ter



ter and better qualified to deliver it; and after some vain, and unsuccessful attempts, to propagate the belief of their Doctrine, they would have given it over, and been ashamed of their rash undertaking. So St. Paul intimates, that had not the mighty Power of God accompanied their Preaching, and made it effectual to the Conversion and Salvation of men, they would have been tempted to have been *ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.* Ser. 10.

But then we must remember, that it is the Doctrine of Christ which is thus confirmed, and not the Doctrines and Traditions of men. For had the concealment of the Doctrine of Christ, and the serving of God in an unknown Tongue, been any part of the Apostles Doctrine, the Gift of Tongues had not been a Confirmation of this Doctrine, but a Contradiction to it; had they Preached Transubstantiation, and the renouncing of our Senses, in order to the belief of it, Miracles could have given no credit to it: for that which depends upon the certainty of Sense (as

Vol. 10. (as Miracles do) cannot be a competent Argument, to prove that which is contrary to Sense; for that which makes me sure of the Miracle which should prove this Doctrine, do's at the same time make me equally sure, that this Doctrine is not true. If there were no other Evidence, that Transubstantiation is no part of the Christian Doctrine; this to a wise Man would be sufficient, that what proves the one, overthrows the other; and that Miracles, which are certainly the best, and highest external proof of Christianity, are the worst proof in the World of Transubstantiation, unless a Man can renounce his Senses, at the same time that he relies upon them; for a Man cannot believe a Miracle, without relying upon his Senses, nor Transubstantiation without renouncing them: And never were any two things so ill coupled together, as the Doctrine of Christianity, and that of Transubstantiation, because they draw several ways, and are ready to strangle one another. The main Evidence and Confirmation of the Christian Doctrine, which is  
 Miracles,

Miracles, is resolved into the Certainty and Testimony of our Senses; but this Evidence is clear and point blank against Transubstantiation.

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II. The Consideration of what hath been said, convinceth men of the great sin of Infidelity, and the Unreasonableness of it, after so clear Conviction and Demonstration as God hath given to the World of the truth of Christianity. That the Gospel was planted, and propagated in the World in so wonderful a manner, and prevailed, notwithstanding all the opposition that was made against it: The remarkable and terrible Destruction of *Jerusalem*, according to our Saviour's Prediction: The several attempts of rebuilding the Temple, particularly by *Julian* the Apostate, in despite to Christianity, and to confute our Saviour's Prediction, so remarkably frustrated, and resisted from Heaven, by Fire flaming out of the Foundation, and consuming the Work-men, so that they were

Vol. 10. were forced to desist; and this recorded by a Heathen Historian *Amianus Marcellinus*. The dispersion of the *Jewish* Nation, and their continuing for so many Ages, separate and distinct from all other People, for a standing accomplishment of our Saviour's Prophecy, and a Testimony to all Ages, of the Truth of Christianity. These, with many more Arguments I might mention, are a clear Evidence to any one that does not obstinately wink and shut his Eyes against the light, that the Doctrine of Christianity came from God.

III. They who believe the Gospel, are inexcusable if they do not obey it, and live according to it. This is the great end of all the Miracles which God hath wrought for the Confirmation of Christianity; that by the belief of the Gospel, men might be brought to the obedience of faith, and live conformably to the Precepts of that Holy Religion, which the Son of God, by so many



utterly inexcusable.

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ny Miracles, hath Planted and Preserved in the World. The Infidelity of men, will be a heavy charge upon them, at the Judgment of the great day, and God will condemn them for it: But we that profess to believe the Gospel, and live contrary to it, shall not only be condemned by the Judgment of God, but by the Sentence of our own Consciences. Our Profession to believe the Gospel, will be an aggravation of our disobedience to it, and every Article of our Creed will be a sore charge against us; and that Faith, which was Ordained to justify us, will be our great Condemnation at the great day.

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Therefore, as the Apostle to the Hebrews argues, *We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we fall away, either by infidelity or impiety of life; for if the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, that is, if disobedience to the Law of Moses was so severely punish'd, and every*

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Vol. 10. every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward: How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which was at first spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed afterwards by them that heard him! God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy-Ghost? For if we sin willfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses, died without Mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, shall we be thought worthy, if we tread under foot the Son of God; and count the blood of the Covenant, whereby we are sanctified, an unholy thing, and offer despite to the Spirit of Grace! It is a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the living God. But, Beloved, I hope better things of you, and things that accompany Salvation, tho

utterly inexcusable.

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I thus speak, and that you are not  
of the number of those, who draw Ser. 10.  
back unto perdition, but of them  
that believe to the saving of your  
Souls.

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S E R-

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# SERMON XI.

Of the coming of the Holy Ghost,  
as a Guide to the Apostles.

JOHN XVI. 12, 13.

*I have yet many things to say unto you,  
but you cannot bear them now. How-  
beit when he, the Spirit of truth, is  
come, he will guide you into all truth.*

**O**UR Saviour having before de-  
clared to his Disciples the great  
Expediency of his leaving the World,  
in order to the coming of the Holy  
Ghost, *ver. 7.* he tells them in the  
next place, what the Office of the Ho-  
ly

ly Ghost should be. In reference to  
 Vol. 10. Christ, he should be an Advocate: and  
 in reference to them, he should be a  
 Guide or Teacher.

1. In reference to Christ, he should  
 be an *Advocate* to plead the Cause of  
 Christ and of his Doctrine, and to vin-  
 dicate them to the World, *ver. 8, 9,*  
*10, 11. And when he is come, he will*  
*convince the world of sin, and of righte-*  
*ousness, and of judgment: Of sin, be-*  
*cause they believe not in me: Of righteous-*  
*ness, because I go to my Father, and ye*  
*see me no more: Of judgment, because the*  
*Prince of this world is judged.* All which  
 I have formerly handled and explain-  
 ed at large.

2. In regard to the Apostles; the  
 Holy Ghost is promis'd to be a *Guide*  
 and *Teacher*, to reveal to them, and  
 instruct them in some Truths, which  
 our Saviour, whilst he was with them,  
 had not so fully acquainted them  
 withal, because of their present inca-  
 pacity and unsuitness at that time to  
 receive them. *I have many things to*  
*say unto you, but you cannot bear them*  
*now:*

by Christ himself.

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now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. Ser. II.

In the handling of these words, I shall do these *two* things.

*First*, I shall endeavour to explain the meaning of them.

*Secondly*, I shall draw some Inferences from them.

*First*, I shall begin with the Explication of them; in order whereunto, it will be requisite to inquire into these *two* things.

I. What those things probably were, which our Saviour did not reveal and declare to his Disciples, because they could not then bear them.

II. What is the meaning of this Promise, that *the Spirit of Truth shall guide them into all Truth.*

I. What those things probably were, which our Saviour did not reveal and declare

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Vol. 10. declare to his Disciples, because they could not then bear them. Our Saviour does not express particularly what those things were, nor can it be expected he should have done so; for then he had declar'd them to them, which he tells us he would not do: but the Text gives us *two* marks to direct our Inquiry concerning them.

1. That they were such things as the Disciples at that time were incapable of. *I have many things yet to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.* So that it seems they were such Truths, as the Disciples were prejudic'd against upon some account or other; most probably by reason of their Education in the *Jewish* Religion, and some Principles which they had imbib'd from the Teachers and Interpreters of their Law.

2. They were such Truths as, after the Holy Ghost did descend upon them, they should be instructed in. So that if we can find out what those Truths were, which the Disciples were fully instructed



instructed in after the coming of the Holy Ghost, which either were not at all, or not so clearly revealed to them before, because of their prejudice against them ; we may then certainly conclude, that these were the things which our Saviour here speaks of, when he says, *I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.* Ser. II.

And upon Inquiry into this matter by these *two* marks, it will appear, that they were principally these *three*.

I. That our Saviour did not design the setting up of any temporal Kingdom in this World ; but that his Kingdom and Government was to be spiritual, not manag'd by any external force or compulsion, or by Laws, the violation whereof he would vindicate by the temporal Sword ; but by Laws, the Sanction and Penalty whereof should take hold of the minds and Spirits of men, and relate into another World.

And this was a Truth which the Disciples were incapable of, whilst our Saviour was here upon Earth; against which they were so prejudic'd by the general Tradition which the *Jews* had entertained, that the *Messias* was to be a great temporal Prince, and to subdue all Nations to them, that they were in a continual expectation, when he would lay aside his mean condition, and appear in that Glory and Majesty which they expected; when like the Sun he would break through all those clouds where-with he was muffled and obscur'd, and shine forth in his full Strength and Glory. For it appears very plain, that they had an hankering expectation after some such thing, and that after he had so plainly declared to them his Death and Sufferings. For the Text tells us, that *They could not understand these things, but they were hid from them*; that is, they were so possess'd with the conceit of his temporal Kingdom, that they could not imagin that any such thing could befall him. And to shew how deeply this conceit

conceit was rooted in them, immediately after Christ had told them so plainly of his Sufferings, *James* and *John* put up a Petition to him, that one of them might sit on his right hand, and the other on his left in his Kingdom. This opinion of his temporal Kingdom did so run in their minds, that they could not understand any thing that seemed to contradict it.

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And tho' our Saviour had so expressly declared, but a little before his Death, that *his Kingdom was not of this world*, and therefore he should make no resistance to the violence that was offered to him, yea, tho' the Disciples saw him put to Death; yet they did not lay aside this opinion, but still expected that he would rise again, and then begin his Kingdom in this World. For so we find the two Disciples discoursing together, as they were going to *Emmans*, *Luke* 24. 21. *We trusted*, say they one to another, *that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel*. And after his Resurrection, this was that which lay uppermost in their minds, and which

Vol. 10. *their thoughts were still upon, as appears by that question which they put to him just before his Ascension, as St. Luke tells us, Acts 1. 6. When therefore they were come together, they asked of him, saying, Wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?*

No wonder then, if being possess'd with so strong a prejudice about this matter, our Saviour did not strive to convince them of it, whilst he was upon Earth; because they could not then have born it: but we find that after the coming of the Holy Ghost, they were fully instructed in it, and quitted the conceit which they formerly entertained, and were satisfied that he was ascended into Heaven, and *set at the right hand of the Majesty of God*, and that from thence he had sent his Spirit to instruct and govern his Church, and that this was the Kingdom of the *Messias*.

They were so possess'd before with another apprehension, that they would almost have rejected him, had they under-



understood that the *Messias* was to have no other Kingdom than this: Ser. II. but after that glorious Confirmation was given to him, by his Resurrection from the dead, and visible ascension into Heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost in such wonderful and miraculous Gifts, then at last they were capable of understanding and receiving this Truth, which could not sink into their Hearts before.

2. Another Truth which our Saviour here probably intended, was the abrogating the *Jewish* Dispensation. And this likewise they must needs be extreemly prejudic'd against; because their Law was given by God, and looked upon by them, not as a temporary, but a perpetual Institution. And this Truth we find that the Apostles were afterwards instructed in, when the Holy Ghost was come upon them. And therefore in the Council at *Jerusalem*, the Apostles releas'd the *Gentiles* from the observance of *Moses* his Law, as a thing which they were perfectly instructed in by the Holy Ghost. *Acts* 15. 28. *It hath seemed*

3. Another Truth which our Saviour probably here intended, was, that the Salvation of the *Messias* belonged to the *Gentiles*, as well as to the *Jews*. The *Jews* had a strong conceit of their own Privileges, and looked upon all the World, besides themselves, as a company of reprobates, that had no share or interest in the Promise of God, or in those great Blessings, which their *Messias* was to bring to the World. And we find that the Disciples had so deeply imbib'd this prejudice in their Education, that they wonder'd at our Saviour, when they found him talking with the *Samaritan Woman*. And tho' before his Ascension he had given them an express command *to go and teach all nations*, yet it seems 'twas a good while before they understood this Command in the latitude in which our Saviour intended it. For 'tis plain from the History of the *Acts*, that till *Peter* was sent to *Cornelius*, and better instructed in this matter by

by Christ himself.

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a Vision from Heaven, they had not at all preach'd the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, being perswaded that it was unlawful to do it: but by the Command of our Saviour *to go and teach all Nations*, they understood that they were to preach to the *Jews* dispersed in all Nations. But after this Vision to *Peter*, and when they saw that the Holy Ghost fell upon the *Gentiles*, in the same manner that it had done upon *them*, then and not before they were instructed in this Truth.

That these are all, or some of the principal of those Truths which our Saviour here means, when he says, that he had yet many things to say unto his Disciples, which they could not then bear, does I hope sufficiently appear; because they were such Truths, as the Disciples were most vehemently prejudic'd against, and which afterwards they were fully instructed in by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and not before.

II. I

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II. I shall inquire what is the meaning of this Promise in the Text, that *the Spirit of Truth will guide them into all Truth.*

That these words are not to be understood in the greatest latitude which they are capable of, I think any one will grant. For certainly no Man ever supposed, that our Saviour here promised that his Spirit should lead his Disciples into the Knowledge of all Natural Truths, and instruct them in all the depths of Philosophy, and in the Mysteries of all Arts and Sciences. Plain it is then, that some limitation must be put upon this general and universal Promise of *leading them into all Truth.* All the difficulty is, how far it is to be limited, and what bounds are to be set to this general Promise.

Now in all Reason it ought to be limited by the Context ; and if we go that way, which is the only reasonable way of limiting general words, then the plain meaning of this Promise



mise will be this; that because our Saviour had foreborn to reveal several Truths to his Disciples, which they were not then capable of, he would supply this difficulty afterwards by his Holy Spirit, who after that he was risen from the dead, and ascended into Heaven, should descend upon them, and instruct them fully in those Truths, which he, in condescension to their prejudice and incapacity, had in his life time foreborn to do; that is, he would take a fitter Season to instruct them fully by his Spirit, in all those Truths, which, whilst he was upon Earth, they were not so capable of receiving. *I have yet many things to say unto you*; that is, Besides what I have already declared to you, there are several other things, which ye are not now so capable of receiving, which the Holy Ghost, whom I will send in my name, shall take a more convenient time to instruct you in.

And our Saviour speaks much to the same purpose, John 14. 25, 26. *These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you: but the Comforter,*

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 Vol. 10. *forter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things; that is, He shall make up and supply what is wanting, and instruct you in those things which ye are not now so capable of receiving.*

I shall now in the *Second* place make some inferences from the words thus explain'd. As,

*First*, That it is not necessary at all times to Preach all Truths, which are of importance to be \*known. For these were great truths which our Saviour forbore for some time to reveal to his Disciples, and were of great importance to the planting and propagating of the Gospel: and yet he thought it better at present to forbear the pressing of them, than by an unreasonable declaration of them to do no good, but only stir up prejudice against himself, and those other necessary Truths which he had instructed them in.

\* *Utile est ut accedatur ali-quod verum, propter incapaces.*  
 Aug.  
 Persev.  
 l. 2. c. 16.

*Secondly,*

as they can bear.

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*Secondly*, That there ought to be due regard had to what People can bear; and where men are possess'd with a violent prejudice against some Truths, we ought, in imitation of our Saviour's Example, patiently to expect and endeavour the removal of that Prejudice; and first to apply all fitting means for the conquering and subduing of it, before we expose Truth to be rejected by those who have taken up a violent prejudice against it. And this Rule holds universally, where we have to deal with Persons who are tractable and willing to learn, but do at present lye under some prejudice of education, or some false Principles which they entertained unawares, which by time and patience, and a gradual progress of Truth may be removed, but are not to be conquer'd and born down at once. There are some prejudices which cannot be pluckt out of the minds of men at once, but yet may be loosen'd so by degrees, that they will fall off of themselves: as there are many Knots untie'd with patience and leisure, which

Vol. 10. which by a violent pulling are fix'd  
so much the faster.

And this course we find the Apostles took, in imitation of our Saviour. 1 Cor. 3. 2. *I have fed you, saith St. Paul there, with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it.* He was contented to instil Truth into them by degrees, and as they were capable of it. The minds of most men are strait and narrow, and cannot receive that at once, which may be instill'd by degrees; like narrow-mouth'd Vessels, into which Liquor may be pour'd by degrees; but if we strive to put it in faster than they can receive it, it runs by and is lost.

But where men are not of a teachable disposition, but the Prejudice against Truth is wilful and affected, there we are bound to propose great and important Truths to men, notwithstanding their Prejudice against them, and to urge upon them those things which are necessary and fit for them to know, *whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.* And if in that



as they can bear.'

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that case they will resist Truth fairly and with full evidence proposed to them, they do it at their peril. God is not obliged to do more, than to offer men sufficient means of conviction; and if they will be obstinate and pertinacious, God is not bound in that case to provide any farther remedy.

Ser. II.

III. Another Inference, and which I principally intended from this Text, is this, That from the Explication which I have given of this Promise of our Saviour's, of sending his Spirit to lead his Disciples into all Truth, it very plainly appears, that there is no ground or colour of ground from this Text, for the pretended Infallibility of the *Romish* Church: and yet this is one of those Texts, which their great Masters of Controversie do urge us withal, for the proof of their Infallibility; a sign that they are much at a loss for good Arguments to prove it by, otherwise they would never summon a Text so very remote from their purpose. And how far this Text is from proving their Church to be

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infallible

Vol. 10. *infallible, will very clearly appear, if we consider these five things.*

1. That the plain and obvious sense of this Promise (as I have already shewn) is this, that because there were some Truths fit for the Apostles to know, which they were not at that time capable of receiving, whilst our Saviour was upon Earth, therefore after his Ascension, he would send his Holy Spirit to instruct them in those things, and to guide them into all those Truths, which it was not then seasonable to acquaint them withal. Now by what art can any Man infer from hence, that our Saviour would give the infallible assistance of his Holy Spirit to the Church of *Rome*, to the end of the World?

2. Let it also be consider'd, that this Promise was made personally to the Apostles, and therefore ought not to be extended beyond them, unless it evidently appear, that it ought to be so extended; unless it evidently appear, either from the tenour of the Promise, or from some other Reason, that

that it was the intention of the Promiser, that this should equally extend Ser. 11.  
to others, as well as to them. 'Tis

true that this Promise was made to the Apostles, not meerly for their own sakes, but for the benefit of the Church; for God thereby promiseth, that his Spirit should reveal those Truths to them, that they might declare them to the Church: but it does not from hence follow, that any other Persons, in succeeding Ages of the Church, should have the same immediate assistance of the Holy Ghost which the Apostles had; because, being once reveal'd to the Church, there was no need of a new Revelation of those Truths in every Age.

3. There is nothing in the tenour of this Promise, nor any other Reason, from whence it may appear, that this Promise ought to be extended any farther, than to the Persons to whom it was made; because this Promise was made with a peculiar respect to the Apostles, and their Employment, and for reasons proper to the first state of the Church; and not common to

Vol. 10. all Ages; therefore it cannot with reason be extended to all after-Ages of the Church.

Let it be granted then, that this Promise taken together with other Promises of our Saviour made to the Apostles, does signifie an infallible assistance to them, so as to secure them from error, in the delivery of the Doctrine of Christ; yet why should any Church afterwards, much less the Church of *Rome* apart from all others, pretend to be heir general to the Apostles in this infallible assistance? The Apostles gave sufficient Evidence of their Infallibility, by the Miracles which they wrought: And let the Pope and general Councils give this Testimony of their Infallibility, and we are ready to acknowledge it. There was reason why this assistance should be afforded to the Apostles in the first Preaching of the Gospel: but after it was planted, and the Doctrine of Christianity consign'd to Writing, there was no need of such an infallible assistance afterwards.

But



But they of the Church of *Rome* Ser. II. tell us, that this infallible assistance was necessary afterwards for the perpetuity of the Church, and for the Government of it, and for the decision of Controversies amongst Christians. To this I answer *two* things.

*First*, If this infallible assistance be necessary to these ends, then it is also necessary, that it should have been declared, what that Church or Society is, which was to be so infallible: else how should men know, whither to have recourse for the Government of the Church, and the decision of Controversies in matters of difficulty. As good the Christian Church be without Infallibility, as that no man should know where it is.

And will any Man have the confidence to say, that God hath any where in Scripture declar'd, that the Church of *Rome* hath this Infallibility annex't to her? Hath the Scripture any where told us, that the Church of *Rome* is the Catholick Church,

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that

Vol. 10. that is, that a particular Church is the Church Universal? If we should suppose the Universal Church to be infallible in matters of Faith and Practice, is it any where said in the Bible, that the Pope, or a general Council, or both together are infallible? Are we any where there directed to have recourse to Rome, and the Bishop of that City, either with or without a general Council, for the Determination of Controversies in Religion? And yet if Infallibility be necessary for the ends mentioned, then certainly 'tis as necessary, that we should have been plainly directed where to find it, that we may make use of it upon occasion. What Man living can perswade himself, that the belief of the Infallibility of the *Romish* Church, that is of the Pope, or of the Pope and Council, should be so fundamental an Article of Faith, as they would make it; and yet that neither Christ nor his Apostles should say one word about it? How comes it to pass, that when there were so many Schisms and Dissentions in the Primitive Church, *St. Paul* should never

never so much as once mention this effectual Remedy of all those Evils, to send them to St *Peter*, who was the only infallible Judge of Controversies? If Christ had appointed this way, then certainly St *Paul* could not have been ignorant of it. Besides that it would have been an excellent direction to the Church in after-Ages, what to have done in the like cases; if our Saviour or any of his Apostles would have given us the least signification, that the Heir of Infallibility had been fixt at *Rome*, and that thither we were to have recourse for the deciding of all differences in Religion.

Especially it must needs seem very wonderful, that St *Paul*, in his Epistle to the *Roman* Church, should not acquaint them what a singular Privilege that Church had above all other Churches, that it was the Seat of Infallibility, and that the Bishop of that Church was the great Judge of Controversies, and that there could no difference arise among them, about any matter of Faith, but they might speedily have it decided from that Chair.

*No proof from this Text,*

Nay on the contrary, there are shrewd intimations given that the Church of Rome her self should apostatize from the Faith, and that her haughtiness would be her ruin. *Rom. 11. 20, 21.* where speaking of the *Jews*, that were *broken off by their unbelief*, he gives this caution to the Church of Rome; *Well: because of unbelief they were broken off and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches; take heed lest he also spare not thee. Be not high minded, but fear.* What needed they to fear, who had the privilege of *Infallibility*? Their Faith must needs be unshaken. But *St. Paul* seems to think that Church to be in as much danger of falling from the Faith, as any other. From whence we may certainly conclude, that he knew nothing of its *Infallibility*. Nay he seems to have foreseen their arrogant pretence to it, and that that very thing would be the occasion of their falling, when he gives them that caution, *Be not high minded, but fear.* For what greater instance could there possibly be of a proud and high mind,



mind, than to assume to themselves to be infallible? But,

Ser. II.

*Secondly*, The ends mentioned may be sufficiently attained without Infallibility. As for the perpetuity of the Church, that may continue to the end of the world, by virtue of the Infallibility of Christ's Promise, tho' there be no Infallibility either in the Church of Rome, or any where else. For setting aside Christ's Promise, the Church may fail; and his Promise signifies only that it *shall not* fail, not that it *cannot*. All that can be inferr'd from the Promise of Christ, concerning the perpetuity of the Church, is only the certainty of the Event, but not the Infallibility of the Cause; not that the Church shall be *infallible*, but only that it shall *not fail*.

In like manner for the government of the Church, and decision of Controversies, there is no need of Infallibility; because the Church may be govern'd well enough, as other Societies are, without an Infallibility; and all Controversies that are necessary to be decided,

*Vol. II.* cided may be decided by the infallible Rule of Faith, *the holy Scriptures*, which are plain in all things necessary; and there is no necessity, that controversies about matters not necessary should be decided.

To conclude this point, If the Pope and a general Council be the Seat of Infallibility, (which is the most general opinion in the Church of *Rome*) then how was the Christian Church govern'd, and Controversies decided before the Council of *Nice*, which was the first general Council; that is for three hundred years? And if the Church did well enough for three hundred years without an infallible Judge, this is a demonstration that there is no absolute need of it.

4. This Promise here in the Text signifies a revelation of some new Truths to the Apostles, which they were not instructed in before, and therefore cannot belong to any Church in after-Ages. For the Church of *Rome* her self does not pretend to any revelation of Objects of Faith not known

known before, and therefore can challenge nothing by virtue of this Promise.

5. Suppose infallible assistance were here promised to the Church in all Ages, and that the Church of Rome were the Catholick Church, and that the Pope and a Council were the Roman Church, and consequently the Catholick, I say, suppose all this granted; yet the Church of Rome, according to her Principles, can never be certain that this is the meaning of this Promise. For they profess to receive both the Scripture and the interpretation of it from the Church, and consequently to believe this Text to be Scripture, and this to be the meaning of this Text, because their Church which is infallible tells them so: and if so, then they do not believe their Church to be infallible, because this Text says so; but they believe this to be the meaning of this Text, because their Church is infallible, and tells them so. So that of necessity they must first believe their Church to be infallible, before they can

 can prove it from this or any other  
Vol. 10. Text ; and consequently, they must  
either prove things in a Circle; or  
else take the meaning of this Text  
of the Infallibility of their Church  
for granted, without any proof. And  
thus much may suffice to have spoken  
to this Text.

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SER-

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# SERMON XII.

Of the ordinary Influence of the  
Holy Ghost, on the minds of  
Christians.

The first Sermon on this Text.

JOHN VII. 39.

*But this spake he of the Spirit, which  
they that believe on him, should re-  
ceive. For the Holy Ghost was not  
yet given, because that Jesus was not  
yet glorified.*

**O**UR Blessed Saviour (who used  
from all sorts of Objects and  
Occurrences to Discourse of Heaven-  
ly and Spiritual things) being present  
at

at the Feast of *Tabernacles*, in which it was the Custom of the *Jews*, from the Fountain *Siloam*, to fetch Water with great Pomp and Ceremony, and to bring it into the Temple with sound of Trumpet, and to offer it, singing those words of the Prophet *Isaiah*, *They shall draw waters with joy out of the wells of Salvation*, I say our Saviour being present at this Feast, takes occasion from these Waters, which they brought into the Temple with so much joy, to proclaim those Spiritual Benefits which Christians should be made partakers of by the Holy Ghost, and which are in Scripture represented by *Waters flowing from a living fountain*. In the last day, the great day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, *If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, that is, according to the tenour of several passages in the Prophets, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; and then the Evangelist adds, by way of farther Explication of our Saviour's meaning, But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.*

For

For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. In which words we have these three things considerable. Ser. 12.

*First*, The Gift it self; which is here called *the Spirit*, or *the Holy Ghost*.

*Secondly*, The Persons upon whom this Gift was to be conferr'd; and those are *Believers*, such as should believe and embrace the Gospel. *This he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.*

*Thirdly*, The particular Time and Season of the first conferring of this Gift; and this was not to be till after our Saviour's Ascension into Heaven, and being receiv'd up into glory. implied in those words, *The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.* I shall as briefly as I can explain these three things.

*First*, The Gift it self, which is here called *the Spirit*, or *the Holy Ghost*. By which we are to understand, a special

Vol. 10.  special Power and Presence of the Holy Ghost with believers, the immediate Operation and Assistance of the Divine Spirit communicated and imparted to them; and this comprehends in it these *two* things.

1. Those Extraordinary and Miraculous Gifts which were bestowed upon the Apostles and Primitive Christians, in order to the planting and propagating of the Christian Religion in the World, and for the use and benefit of the Church, while it was under Persecution, and destitute of all secular Countenance and Assistance, and of those ordinary Humane Advantages which are sufficient to preserve and maintain a Religion, after it is once firmly settled, and generally entertained. And these Gifts were in a very remarkable manner, and such as no Religion that ever was in the World can pretend to the like, conferred upon the first Preachers of the Christian Doctrine, and Planters of it in the World; and they were in a high degree necessary, to give Credit and Countenance to this Religion at its



its first appearance, and to awaken the  
drowsie World to an attentive consid- Ser. 11.  
eration of it, to conquer the Prejudi-  
ces of men against a new Religion, and  
to support and bear up the Teachers  
and Publishers of this Doctrine, against  
that violent opposition and persecuti-  
on which would certainly be raised  
against it, and likewise to supply the  
want of Secular Power and Authority  
to give countenance and assistance to  
it.

For these and such like Ends and  
Reasons, God was pleased at that time  
not only to endue the Apostles and  
first Preachers of Christianity with all  
sorts of miraculous Powers, but even  
the generality of Christians with se-  
veral extraordinary Gifts; and also to  
accompany the outward Preaching  
of the Gospel with a very extraordi-  
nary influence of God's Spirit upon  
the minds of men; to make way for  
the entertainment of it by opening  
their understandings, and enlightning  
their minds to discern Spritual  
things, by subduing their Prejudices, and  
conquering their Lusts, and the vitious

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and

and perverse inclinations of their  
 Vol. 10. wills, to the obedience of Faith, by raising their minds above the world, above all the allurements and enjoyments of it, and above all the threatnings and terrors of it, and giving men Courage and Resolution to embrace this Profession, and with Constancy to adhere to it, notwithstanding all the Dangers and Sufferings which attended it.

I shall not now treat of these miraculous Gifts particularly, having  
 \* See had frequent occasion heretofore \* to  
 Vol. 2. discourse at large of the Nature, and  
 Ser. 5. and several kinds, and particular Use and  
 this Vol. Ends of them. I shall only observe to  
 Ser. 9. you, that this Power of Miracles, and this extraordinary influence of the Spirit of God upon the minds of men, was not intended always to continue in the Church, but only so long as there should be need and occasion for it, that is, 'till the Christian Religion was fully propagated and planted, and the fury of Persecution abated, and 'till Christianity had the favour and countenance of the Civil  
 Author

Authority, and the Prejudice of Education on its side. For when by this Ser. 12. means it came to stand upon equal terms of advantage with other Religions, God then withdrew his extraordinary Assistance, and left it to be maintained and supported by more human and ordinary ways, and in a great measure by its own rational Force and Power upon the Minds of men.

II. THE Gift of the Holy Ghost doth likewise signify and comprehend in it a more ordinary and gentle Influence of God's Spirit upon the minds of men, to all holy and good Purposes ; by which I mean, an immediate Operation and Assistance of the Holy Ghost afforded to men, to relieve the weakness and impotence of human Nature, to help and strengthen us to the Performance of what the Gospel requires of us. And this I shall have occasion to explain more particularly, when I have gone over the other Parts of the Text.

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*Secondly*, You have here the qualification of the Persons who were to be made partakers of this Gift, and that is *Believing* and Embracing the Gospel. *This he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.*

The Extraordinary and Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit were not conferred on any, but those who embraced the Faith of Christ, and made Profession of the Christian Religion. Not that all Christians were endowed with those Extraordinary Gifts, much less all in an equal degree. But they were distributed, as *St. Paul* tells us, in such manner and measure as the Wisdom of God thought fit, and as was most for the Use and Edification of the Church. But all were partakers of the Holy Ghost in respect of his more ordinary influence and assistance, and this Gift all Christians receiv'd upon their embracing and owning the Christian Religion. Thus *Acts* 5. 32. *The Holy Ghost is said to be given by God to them that*

obey



obey him. And Galat. 3. 14. We are  
said to receive the promise of the Spirit  
through Faith. And Ephes. 1. 13. In  
whom also after that ye believed, ye were  
sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

And because this Profession of  
Faith was made in Baptism, where-  
by men are solemnly initiated into  
the Christian Religion, hence it is,  
that this Gift of the Holy Ghost is  
in Scripture promised, and said to be  
conferred in Baptism. Acts 2. 38.  
Then Peter said unto them, Repent and  
be baptized every one of you in the  
name of Jesus Christ, for the remission  
of sins, and ye shall receive the Gift  
of the Holy Ghost. And Heb. 6. 4.  
The Apostle speaking of those who  
had solemnly taken upon them the  
profession of Christianity, he thus  
describes them, Those who were once  
enlightened, that is, Baptized; (for so  
Baptism is frequently by the Anci-  
ents call'd illumination) Those who were  
once Baptized, and have tasted of the  
Heavenly gift, and were made parta-  
kers of the Holy Ghost; implying that  
this Heavenly gift of God's Holy Spi-  
rit, was conferred upon Christians in  
A a 3 their

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their Baptism ; and hence it is, that *Baptizing with water and the Holy Ghost* are frequently put together, *Water* being the outward Symbol, and the *Holy Ghost* the inward grace, conferred in Baptism. So likewise the Apostle joyns together the *laver of regeneration*, and the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5.

All which considered, I cannot imagine why so great a scruple should be made of those expressions which our Church useth in the Office of Baptism of *Children* ; *Being regenerated and born again by Baptism*, and *being thereby made the Children of God*, and *heirs of eternal life*. That is, by entering into this Covenant, they are put into a State and Capacity of all the Blessings of the Gospel, if they do not neglect the condition which that Covenant requires on their part. For all this is in truth no other but what the Scripture says of Baptism, and ascribes to it, when it calls it, *The laver of regeneration*, when it declares the Spirit to be conferred in Baptism, and when it says, that *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God*, and that *the Sons of God, are*

beirs of eternal life. So that I cannot see that our Church, in her highest expressions concerning the Benefits and Effects of Baptism, says any thing but what is very agreeable, both to the Expressions and Sense of Scripture. And thus not only the Ancient Fathers spake of this matter, but so likewise do all the Liturgies of the reformed Churches, in the Offices and Forms appointed by them for the Administration of Baptism; so that it seems a very affected singularity to take Exceptions at such Expressions as have constantly been, and still are generally used in all Christian Churches. The

Ser. 12.

Third Thing considerable in the Text is, the particular Time and Season of the conferring of this Gift of the Holy Ghost; and that was after our Saviour's Ascension into Heaven, and being receiv'd up into Glory, implied in those words, *The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified*; signifying to us, that this effusion of the Spirit

Vol. 10. was not to be till after our Saviour's Ascension into Heaven.

But was not the Holy Ghost given to the Prophets of old? And were not good men in former Ages of the World under the ordinary Influence and Assistance of the Divine Grace and Spirit? Why is it then said that *the Holy Ghost was not yet given?*

The Answer to this is easie, That our Saviour here speaks of that general and plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost which was promised to *the latter days*, that is, to the *Gospel Age*; the like to which, both for the universal Communication of this Gift, and for the Extraordinary Degree and Measure of its Participation, had never been in the World before; and of this it is, that the *Evangelist* speaks, when he dates the time of it, from after our Saviour's Ascension into Heaven. Now why the dispensation of this Gift of the Holy Ghost was particularly limited to this time, tho' it is not necessary



*after Christ was glorified.*

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necessary we should know the Reasons of it, yet there are *three* obvious ones, which may give us full satisfaction in this matter. Ser. 12.

1. Because it was not so necessary before in our Saviour's life-time. For during his continuance in the World, and Conversation with his Disciples, his Presence supplied all other defects: but when he left them, they were, as he calls them, *Orphans*, destitute of help, comfort, and protection; and therefore it was requisite, that upon his departure from them, this *Comforter* and *Advocate* should come to abide and continue with them for ever. But this does not seem to reach fully the Reason assigned in the Text, why *The Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.* Therefore,

2. It seems very convenient, not only that our Saviour should be visibly taken up into Heaven, but that after he was ascended thither, he should give some remarkable Testimony to the World, of the Power

er and Dignity to which he was  
 Vol. 10. there advanced; and that as a King,  
 he should give some Evidence of  
 his Authority and Majesty, at his  
 Solemn Inauguration into his King-  
 dom, by dispensing plentiful spiri-  
 tual Gifts, as the Princes of this  
 World are wont at such a time to scat-  
 ter temporal Favours and Benefits.  
 And this the Scripture takes  
 notice of, as an Evidence and Testi-  
 mony of his Royal Dignity, and  
 Glorious Exaltation at the Right  
 hand of God, *Acts* 5. 31, 32. *Him*  
*bath God exalted* (speaking of our  
 Blessed Lord) *with his own right hand,*  
*to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give*  
*repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness*  
*of sins. And we are his witnesses of*  
*these things; and so also is the Holy*  
*Ghost, whom God hath given to them*  
*that obey him.* Where you see that  
 the Gift of the Holy Ghost is mention'd  
 as a Testimony of our Saviour's be-  
 ing exalted as a Prince at the right  
 hand of God. But more expressly  
 St. Paul, *Eph.* 4. 8. applies to our Sa-  
 viour these words of the Psalmist,  
*Wherefore he saith, when he ascended*

*after Christ was glorified.*

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*up on high, he led captivity captive,  
and gave gifts unto men.*

Ser. 12.

3. After our Saviour's Ascension, there was the greatest occasion that ever was for the bestowing of this Gift of the Holy Ghost, considering what kind of Persons they were, that were appointed to publish the Gospel to the World; and that this great Work being to be carried on by Instruments in all appearance so weak, and mean, and contemptible, there was an absolute necessity of an extraordinary Testimony to be given from Heaven to the Divinity of this new Doctrine, and of a Divine Power and Presence going along with it, to Encourage and Support those weak Instruments in carrying on of this Work, against the mighty Opposition and Persecution it was likely to meet withal, and against such difficulties and obstacles as were plainly insuperable by any human power and means. For as there never was a Work of greater consequence and difficulty than this Undertaking; so could this Divine Power and Assistance

ance never have appeared and manifested it self, upon a fitter and more worthy occasion. Since our Saviour, according to the wise Counsel of God, intended, that after his Ascension into Heaven, his Gospel should be publish'd to the World, it was highly requisite that the minds of men should be prepared for it, and way made for the more ready entertainment and easie passage of it, by some signal testimony of the Divine Presence attending the first Publishers of it, and by Circumstances, tho' not so full of terroure and amazement, as those which did accompany the giving of the Law, yet really of greater Force and Efficacy, and more apt to convince the World of the Truth of this Doctrine, and to insinuate it more effectually into the Hearts and Consciences of men.

And now that I have given you a brief account of the three particulars, which from this Text offer themselves to our Consideration, I shall return back to that which I intended more especially to insist upon,



*consider'd as to its Nature.*

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on, and that is, the more ordinary Influence of the Holy Spirit of God *Ser. 12.* upon the minds of those who believe and embrace the Christian Doctrine; and this I shall endeavour to explain to you under these *four* Heads.

*First*, I shall open to you the Nature of it.

*Secondly*, The Necessity of it, to enable us to perform the Condition of the Gospel Covenant.

*Thirdly*, The Blessed Effects of it.

*Fourthly*, The Extent of it, as to Persons and Times.

*First*, I shall endeavour to open to you the Nature of this Gift of the Holy Ghost, understanding by it the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit of God upon the Hearts and Minds of Believers. And I doubt not but that the Scripture means by it an immediate influence and operation of

*The ordinary influence of the Holy Ghost,*  
 of the Holy Spirit of God upon the  
 Vol. 10. minds of men, an inward Power,  
 Strength and Assistance communicat-  
 ed to Christians, to all the purpo-  
 ses of Holiness and Obedience, ena-  
 bling them to be such *manner of per-*  
*sons in all holy conversation and god-*  
*liness* as the Gospel requires: and not  
 only that this Strength and Assistance  
 is offered and afforded to us, *to work in*  
*us, both to will and to do* all that is ne-  
 cessary to Salvation, if we put no  
 Obstacle thereto, and do not resist  
 the Spirit of God, and the blessed  
 motions of it; but likewise that  
 this power does continually dwell and  
 reside in all true Christians, if we  
 do not grieve the Spirit of God,  
 and provoke him to withdraw him-  
 self from us.

And this is sufficiently declared in  
 several places of the New Testament,  
 where we are said to be *assisted by a*  
*Divine power, and strengthened with*  
*all might by the Spirit in the inner*  
*man, to walk in the Spirit, to be led*  
*by the Spirit, and by the Spirit to*  
*mortifie the deeds of the flesh; and*  
 likewise

*consider'd as to its Nature.*

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Ser. 12.

likewise in those Texts, wherein the Spirit of God is said to work mightily in them that believe, to dwell in them, to sanctifie and renew them, with many such like expressions, frequently to be met with in the Writings of the Apostles. By all which, unless we offer notorious violence to the plain and obvious sense of them, we must necessarily understand something more than the confirmation which was given to the Christian Doctrine, by the Miracles that were wrought by the Power of the Holy Ghost, which Doctrine being thus confirmed, does by way of rational Conviction work upon the minds of men, and change their Wills, without any internal Operation and immediate Assistance of the Holy Ghost. Such a remote influence of the Spirit of God upon men as this is, does by no means seem to answer the fullness of those Phrases and Expressions, which the Scripture so frequently useth concerning it; and if any Man do but seriously weigh and consider them, nothing less than an immediate influence of the Spirit of God upon our Hearts, and a real Strength and

*The ordinary influence of the Holy Ghost,*  
and Power thereby communicated to  
us, can be imagined to satisfy the  
proper Sense and Meaning of the  
several Expressions which I have men-  
tioned.

And that the Scripture, by the Pro-  
mise of the Spirit, and the various  
Expressions concerning it, does mean  
this ordinary assistance common to all  
Christians in all times, and not only  
the extraordinary and miraculous Gifts  
of the Holy Ghost; which were pecu-  
liar to the first Ages of Christianity;  
seems to me to be very plain; because  
the Scripture makes the Gift of the  
Spirit to be common to all believers;  
and to be given to all that are Bap-  
tized, and this in all Ages of the  
Church; as appears from those words  
of St. Peter, *Acts 2: 38, 39. Then Pe-  
ter said unto them, Repent and be bap-  
tized every one of you in the name of  
Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and  
ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy-  
Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and  
to your Children, and to all that are  
as far off, even as many as the Lord our  
God shall call. This promise is the pro-*  
mise



*consider'd as to its Nature.*

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*promise of the Holy Ghost*, which he says is made *to them and their posterity*, that in all succeeding ages should be gain'd to the Faith of Christ. So that this *promise of the Holy Ghost*, which St. Peter speaks of, and declares to be conferr'd in *Baptism*, does not respect only the first Ages of Christianity; but all succeeding Generations; and therefore cannot be understood of the Power of Miracles, because that is long since ceased in the Christian Church.

And this appears yet more Evidently, in that the Scripture makes the want of the Spirit, a sign that a man is no true and sincere Christian. If *any man have not the Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his: and on the contrary, makes our having the Spirit of God, a mark of a Child of God. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God*: But our Saviour hath assured us, that men may have the miraculous Gifts of the Spirit of God, *may prophesie in Christ's name, and cast out Devils in his name, and in his name do many wondrous works*, and yet be

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workers

*The ordinary influence of the Holy Ghost, workers of iniquity, and shut out of the Kingdom of God.* And on the other hand, men may not have these miraculous Gifts, and yet be *the Children of God.* But this will yet more fully appear, if we consider in the

*Second place, The great Necessity of such an immediate influence and assistance of the Spirit of God, to enable Christians to perform the condition of the Covenant of the Gospel. The great Corruption and Degeneracy of human Nature, and the impotency and weakness consequent thereupon, is not only matter of Divine Revelation, but hath always been the general apprehension and acknowledgment, and the sad complaint of the wisest part of Mankind; and indeed, every Man may feel it in himself, and observe it in others. Now for our relief and recovery out of this miserable and degenerate state, God was pleased in great Pity and Commiseration to Mankind, to send his Son into the World, to reveal his Will and our Duty a-new to us, for our direction in the way to life and happiness; and by the Sacrifice of him-*

himself to make a perfect expiation of sin ; and to proclaim forgiveness of sins to us, for the encouragement of our Repentance, and return to our Duty ; and, in a word, to offer new terms of life and happiness to us, upon the conditions of Faith, and Repentance, and new Obedience.

Ser. 12.

But after all this is done for us, we are still without strength, our Nature being depraved, and sunk into that impotency and weakness, that without the powerful assistance of Divine Grace, we are utterly unable to perform those most equal and reasonable conditions which the Gospel requires of us, *Being, as the Scripture expresseth it, dead in trespasses and sins, and estranged from the life of God, through the darkness that is in us, and the blindness of our hearts ; being enslaved to vicious habits, and having a carnal mind, which is enmity to God, and renders us incapable to receive or relish Divine and Spiritual things.* So that notwithstanding all that our Blessed Saviour hath done and suffered for us, and all the merciful overtures of Pardon and Happiness, which

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 Vol. 10. the Gospel makes to us, all this will
 signifie nothing to our Benefit and
 Advantage, unless our impotency be
 relieved, and new life and strength
 be conveyed to us, to awaken and
 excite us to that which is good, to
 enable us to mortifie and subdue our
 evil and corrupt inclinations, to break
 off our vicious habits, and to walk in
 the ways of God's Commandments.
*For we are not sufficient of our selves, as
 of our selves, for any of these things;
 but our sufficiency is of God. Without
 Christ we can do nothing; and it is only
 through him strengthening of us, that we
 are able to do all those things which
 are necessary to be done by us, in or-
 der to the obtaining of that Happi-
 ness and Salvation which the Gospel
 hath promised, and our Saviour hath
 purchased for us. And therefore our
 merciful Redeemer, that he might
 not leave his work imperfect, hath
 sent his blessed Spirit into our Hearts
 to enlighten the eyes of our minds, and
 to open and dispose our understand-
 ings, for the receiving of Divine and
 Spiritual Truths; to conquer likewise
 the perverseness and stubbornness of
 our Wills, and to set us at Liberty*

from the Slavery of our Lusts; (for *where the Spirit of God is, as St. Paul Ser. 12. tells us, there is liberty;*) to renew our Natures, and to purifie our hearts, to mortifie our corrupt affections, and to assist us to every good word and work; to strengthen us against Temptations, to support us under Sufferings and Persecutions, and, in a word, to keep us by this mighty power of God, and gracious assistance of his Holy Spirit, through faith unto Salvation.

So that whosoever shall but duly weigh and consider his own darkness and ignorance, the strange and unreasonable prejudices of a corrupt mind against Divine Truth, and against the Practice of Holiness and Virtue, the strong byass of mens natural inclinations to that which is evil, the mighty force and Power of evil and inveterate habits within us, and the strength and violence of manifold Temptations without us, together with the great difficulties and discouragements of Piety and Virtue, especially when they are attended with grievous Sufferings and fiery Tryals, for Righteousness sake; I say, he

The ordinary influence of the Holy Ghost,
 Vol. 10. that considers all this, will easily discern, and readily acknowledge, how great a necessity there is of the grace and assistance of God's Holy Spirit to all the purposes of a firm Faith, and a sincere Repentance, and a constant and universal Obedience to the Holy Laws and Precepts of the Gospel, to rescue us from the Power and Dominion of Sin, to raise us to a new life, to engage us in an holy course, and to fortifie our resolutions against sin, and to enable us to persevere, and patiently continue in doing and suffering the will of God.

'Tis this gracious influence, and continual assistance of God's Holy Spirit residing and dwelling in us, which secures all the other Blessings and Benefits of the Gospel to us, and conducts us safely through all the temptations of this World, and the difficulties of a Christian course, to the end of our faith, the eternal Salvation of our Souls. For which reason, the Spirit of God dwelling in good men, and evidencing it self by its genuine Fruits and Effects, the Graces and Virtues of a good life, is said to be the Pledge

necessary to Christians.

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Ser. 12.

Pledge and Earnest of our future Inheritance, and of a blessed Resurrection to eternal life, and to seal us up to the day of redemption, Rom. 8. 11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. For the same reason the Apostle makes the Spirit of God, by which Christians are governed and led, to be the mark of their adoption, and being the Children of God, and heirs of eternal life. Verse 14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God. And ver. 16, 17. The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God. And if Children; then heirs, heirs of God, and joynt heirs with Christ. And elsewhere the Apostle useth it for an Argument, why we should be careful not to resist, or quench the motions of God's blessed Spirit; because by this mark we are sealed to eternal life And quench not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. I should now have proceeded in the

Third place, To shew the blessed Effects of the influence of the Holy Spirit dwelling and residing in us: but that, together with the Extent of this Gift of the Holy Ghost, as to Persons and Times, I shall refer to another opportunity.

S E R.

SERMON XIII.

Of the ordinary Influence of the Holy Ghost, on the minds of Christians.

The Second Sermon on this Text.

JOHN VII. 39.

But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him, should receive. For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.

IN my former Discourse from these Words, I observ'd that the Gift of the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, comprehends under it *two things*.

First,

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First, Those extraordinary and miraculous Gifts, which were bestowed upon the Apostles and Primitive Christians, in order to the Planting and Propagating of the Christian Religion in the World; together with that extraordinary Influence of God's Spirit upon the Minds of Believers, which accompanied the first Preaching of the Gospel.

Secondly, The more ordinary and gentle Influence of the Spirit of God, upon the Minds of all those who Believe and Embrace the Gospel.

The latter of these I proposed to speak to more particularly and fully, and that under these four Heads.

First, To open the Nature of this Influence.

Secondly, To shew the Necessity of it, to enable us to perform the Condition of the Gospel Covenant.

Thirdly,

consider'd in its Effects.

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Thirdly, to consider the blessed Effects of it. Ser. 13.

Fourthly, To consider the Extent of it, as to Persons and Times.

The *two first* of these I have spoken to, and now proceed to what remains, viz.

Thirdly, To consider, the blessed Effects of this Gift of the Holy Ghost. And they are many and great.

I shall enumerate them as briefly as I can, not intending to insist long upon them. And in general, all the good that is in us, and proceeds from us, all good Thoughts and Inclinations, all good Purposes and Resolutions, all good Works and Actions, are in Scripture every where ascribed to the Dictates and Motions, to the influence and assistance of the Holy Spirit of God. It is *he that works in us, both to will and to do of his own mere goodness*. All our strength and sufficiency is from him. To his blessed inspirations and aids we owe all good inclinations,

380 *The ordinary influence of the Holy Ghost,*
Vol. 10. ons, our beginning, and our progress,
and our perseverance in Virtue and
Goodness. And tho' the Spirit be said
to be *given* to them that do already
believe, that is, so as to dwell and
reside, to take up his constant habi-
tation and abode, only in those who
have already sincerely embraced the
Christian Faith; yet this doth not
exclude a preventing influence and
operation of God's Holy Spirit upon
the minds of those to whom the Go-
spel is offered, disposing them to em-
brace and entertain it, and by this means
working Faith in them. And in this sense
it is, that *faith* in Scripture is said to be
the gift of God, because it is first wrought
in them by the influence and opera-
tion of that blessed Spirit, which is
promised to dwell and reside in them
after they have believed, and sincere-
ly embraced the Christian Religi-
on.

More particularly these blessed
Fruits and Effects are constantly in
Scripture attributed to the Holy Spi-
rit of God.

I. Our

1. Our Sanctification. We are said *to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and by the Spirit to mortifie the deeds of the flesh.* That great change which is wrought in Man, which in Scripture is called by the several names of *Regeneration, and a new birth, of the new creature, and the new man,* is constantly ascrib'd to the Spirit of God as the Author of it.

2. The conduct of our whole Christian course, and all the actions of it, and our constancy and perseverance in it, are likewise ascribed to the same blessed Cause. We are said *to be led by the Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit;* that is, to be guided and assisted in all that we do, by this blessed Principle, which does as it were act and animate all good men; and we are said *to be kept by the mighty power of God,* that is, by the powerful operation of God's Holy Spirit, *through faith unto Salvation.*

3. All particular Graces and Virtues are likewise said to be *the Fruit*
of

The ordinary influence of the Holy Ghost, of the Spirit, Gal. 5. 22. The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, (or rather Fidelity,) Meekness, Temperance. And Ephes. 5. 9. The Fruit of the Spirit is in all Goodness, and Righteousness, and Truth. And Charity, which is the sum almost of all other Graces and Virtues, is said to be planted and wrought in us by the Spirit, 1 Pet. 1. 22. seeing ye have purified your Souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit, unto charity, or unfeigned love of the brethren.

4. By the same Spirit we are said to be made partakers of that great and glorious priviledge of adoption, and are advanced to that high Honour and Dignity of being called the Sons of God, Rom. 8. 14. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God, and consequently heirs of a blessed Resurrection to eternal life. For so the Apostle reasons, Verses 16, 17. The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirit, that is, is a Testimony within us, that we are the children of God. And if children; then heirs, heirs of God,*

God, and joynt heirs with Christ; if Ser. 13.
 so be that we suffer with him, that
 we may be also glorified together.

So that the Holy Spirit of God, which
 is conferr'd upon all sincere Christians,
 and does reside in them, is a Mark
 or Seal of their being the children of
 God, and a pledge or earnest of the
 blessed inheritance of eternal life, as
 the Scripture very plainly and fre-
 quently declares, 2 Cor. 1. 21, 22.

Now he which establisheth us with you
 in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;
 who hath also sealed us, or set his sig-
 nature and mark upon us; and what
 this is, he explains in the next words,
 and hath given us the earnest or pledge of
 the Spirit in our hearts. Ephes. 1. 13, 14.
 In whom also after that ye believed, ye
 were sealed with that Holy Spirit of
 promise; which is the earnest of our in-
 heritance, until the redemption of the
 purchased possession. And Chap. 4. 30.
 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God,
 whereby ye are sealed unto the day
 of redemption.

5. By this Spirit we have free ac-
 cess to God in Prayer, in Confidence
 that

The ordinary influence of the Holy Ghost,
 that we shall have our Petitions granted, Ephes. 2. 18. *For through him, that is through Jesus Christ, we both have an access, by one Spirit, unto the Father.* By the same Spirit likewise we are assisted in our Prayers to God, and directed what to ask of him. So St. Paul tells us, Rom. 8. 26. *that We do not know what to pray for as we ought; but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and intercedeth for us; that is, suggests to us such Petitions and Requests as are fit for us to put up to God.*

6. By the same Spirit *Joy and Peace in believing*, and from the Testimony of a good Conscience, *great Consolation and good hope through Grace*, are frequently instill'd into us, and shed abroad in our Hearts. Hence are those Expressions so frequent in Scripture, of *the Consolations of the Spirit, of Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost*, which as it is the Natural Fruit of Righteousness, so it is likewise produced and increased in us, by the secret operation and influence of God's Holy Spirit.

7. And

7. And *lastly*, By the same Spirit Christians are supported and born up, *Ser. 13.* cheered and comforted in all their troubles and afflictions, and that in a very extraordinary and supernatural manner, when they fall under great Tribulations and Sufferings for Righteousness sake. And this influence and assistance of the Divine Spirit, was very visible and remarkable among the Primitive Christians, who were so terribly exposed to the most fierce and cruel Persecutions; and may proportionably be expected in all cases of extraordinary suffering for the testimony of God's Truth.

And tho' this influence and assistance, this conduct and guidance of the Divine Spirit, be commonly very gentle and secret, and do usually work upon us in so inperceptible a manner, that it is very hard, if not impossible, particularly to distinguish between the motions of God's Spirit, and those of our own minds, between the immediate suggestions of the Holy Ghost, and the dictates of our own reason; yet we are in general sufficiently as-
C c fured

Vol. 10. *Vol. 10.* *fured of it, partly from the Effects*
 themselves, but principally from the
 exprefs promise and declarations of
 Scripture, that Christians are acted
 by a supernatural Principle, and
 secretly assisted by the influence of a
 Spirit above our own : And therefore
 we have reason, as the Scripture con-
 stantly does, to ascribe all the good
 that is in us, or that is done by us,
 to this gracious assistance and power-
 ful influence of the Holy Spirit of
 God upon our Minds, and thankfully
 to acknowledge that *in us, that is, in*
our flesh, in our carnal Minds, con-
 sidered as destitute of the Spirit of God,
there dwells nothing that is good; and
 that *by the grace of God we are what we*
are, and are enabled to do all the good
 we do, *through Christ strengthning of us*
by his Spirit in the inner man. I pro-
 ceed to the

Fourth and last thing I proposed to
 consider, *viz.* The Extent of this
 Gift of the Holy Spirit of God as to
 Persons and Times. And in short, this
 Gift is bestowed upon every particu-
 lar Christian, every sincere Believer;
 for

consider'd as to its Extent.

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for we receive the promise of the Spirit by faith: And If any any man, says the Apostle, Rom. 8. 9. have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; that is, he does not belong to him, he is no true Christian. And, 1 Cor. 3. 16. Know ye not, says the same Apostle, speaking of all Christians in general, know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

Ser. 13.

And that this Gift extends to all Persons in all Times and Ages of the Church, to all that sincerely embrace the Christian Profession, and are admitted into it by Baptism, is plain from that Discourse of St. Peter which I had occasion to mention before, Acts 2. 38. Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost. And that this was not a favour and priviledge peculiar to the first Ages of Christianity, but common to all succeeding times, is evident from what follows, 1 Cor. 12. 13. But the promise, that is, the great Promise of the Holy Ghost, is

C c 2

unto

Vol. 10. *unto you, and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. That is, this Promise of the Spirit extends to all those who shall hereafter embrace the Christian Profession.*

And in this sense, our Saviour makes good that promise which he made to the Apostles, *to be with them always in the work of making Disciples, and baptizing them, to the end of the world;* that is, he would accompany the labours of the Pastors and Teachers of his Church in all Ages, with such a presence and influence of his Spirit upon those that were *taught and baptized*, as should be suitable to the occasions and necessities of the Church, both the Pastors and the Members of it, *unto the end of the world.* In a word, this Gift of God's Holy Spirit is bestowed upon all those who by Baptism are admitted into Christ's Religion, and if it be cherish'd and complied with, and the blessed motions of it be not resisted and quenched by us, it will abide and continue with us, and produce those blessed Fruits and

Our advantage, encouragement, &c.
and Effects which I have before mentioned.

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Ser. 13.

Having thus explain'd the several particulars contain'd in the Text, all that now remains, is to make some useful Inferences from the whole; and they shall be these following, and I shall be very brief in them.

I. What an encouragement is here to our Duty, that we have such a mighty Aid and Assistance promised and afforded to us in the Gospel? So that the Apostle doth with great reason exhort, *2 Cor. 7. 1. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* And we are utterly inexcusable, if we do not make use of that grace which is promised, and ready to be afforded to us to this end; it is our own fault if *sin* still have dominion over us, and reign in our mortal bodies, that we should obey it in the lusts of it.

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II. What

II. What great cause have we thankfully to acknowledge the wonderful Goodness of God to us, in bestowing such an invaluable Gift upon us, as this of the Holy Spirit, by whose Grace and Assistance alone we are made partakers of all the other Blessings and Benefits of the Gospel? Had we been still left without strength, that great Salvation which Christ hath purchased for us, and which the Gospel offers, would have signified nothing to us, for want of Power to have performed the Conditions which the Gospel requires of all that hope for eternal life and Salvation.

III. Let us alway be ready to comply with the Motions and Suggestions of the blessed Spirit, and sincerely make use of those aids and assistances which he is always ready to afford to us; and let us take great heed, that we do not by any disobedience of ours to his blessed motions, or by any wilful presumptuous sins, resist and quench, and grieve this holy Spirit of God,

on account of the Holy Spirit.

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God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption.

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If the Spirit of God vouchsafe to dwell in us, and to make his abode in our sinful Souls and Bodies; let us do nothing that is unworthy of so Divine and Heavenly a Guest; let his Presence with us fill our Hearts with a continual awe and reverence of him, and engage us effectually to cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and Spirit; let nothing be acted by us, or proceed from us, which may defile this Temple of the Holy Ghost. *Ye are the Temple of the living God,* says S. Paul, 2 Cor. 6. 16. And in the first of the Corinthians, 3. 16, 17. *Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are.* More particularly the Apostle useth it as an Argument to flee from Fornication, because our Bodies also are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 6. 18, 19. *Flee fornication: for every sin*

C c 4

that

392 Our advantage, encouragement, and duty,
Vol. 10. *that a man doth, that is, other sins which men commit, are without the body; but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body; that is, pollutes and defiles it. And then it follows, What, know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorifie God in your body, and in your spirit, which are Gods.*

IV. Let us earnestly beg of God his Holy Spirit, and continually depend upon him for his Grace and assistance, in an humble sense of our own impotency and weakness, of the frailty and treachery of our own Spirits, of the fickleness and inconstancy of our best purposes and resolutions, always remembring that saying of our Saviour's, *John 15. 5. Without me ye can do nothing.* And that of St. Paul, *Ephes. 2. 8. For by grace are ye saved through faith: And that not of your selves: it is the gift of God.* And that of St. Peter, *1 Pet. 1. 5.* speaking in general of all true Christians,

ans, *Who, says he, are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. This power of God is the Spirit which they that believe receive, and by the blessed guidance and influence whereof they are kept unto Salvation.* Ser. 13.

V. This shews us what an advantage we have by the Christian Religion, which makes us partakers of the Holy Ghost, whereby is afforded to us all necessary direction and assistance, and comfort in our Christian course. Our Saviour tells his Disciples, that the presence and influence of this *Comforter and Advocate*, whom *he would send to abide with them for ever*, would be more to them, than even his own personal presence among them, which surely we should look upon as an unspeakable privilege and happiness; and yet the inward presence of the Divine Spirit is more for our security and comfort, than the best Teacher and Example; because it is inward, and conveys a real strength to us; and it is universal, diffusing it self at once into the Hearts and

Vol. 10. and Minds of all good men, and is always present to them, which Christ's Personal and visible Presence was not, nor could be; so that to all purposes of direction and assistance, of security and comfort, we are in a better condition under the continual influence and conduct of God's Holy Spirit, than they who had the advantage and happiness of conversing personally with our Saviour here upon Earth. And therefore he tells his Disciples, that it was really for their Benefit and Advantage, that he should leave the World, to make way for the coming of this Comforter and Advocate, *John 16. 7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: But if I depart, I will send him unto you.* So that they were gainers by their loss, and his departure from them upon these terms was really to their advantage.

VI. This shews the great fault of the contempt and neglect of the Sacrament of Baptism, which was instituted

tuted by our Saviour as the solemn Rite and Ceremony of admitting Persons into the Christian Religion, and the Means of making us partakers of this Gift of the Spirit, and of all the blessed Fruits and Effects of it; so that this Sacrament cannot be neglected or slighted, without great affront to the Christian Religion, and contempt of one of the greatest blessings promised in the Gospel. They that were admitted to the solemn Profession of Christianity by Baptism, were *made partakers of the Holy Ghost*; and this not only in the Apostles times, but in all after Ages; for this *promise of the Holy Ghost was to them and their Children, and to all that were afar off, even to as many as the Lord their God should call*; that is, to all that should embrace the Christian Religion, and make a solemn Profession of it in Baptism, in all succeeding Ages to the end of the World.

VII. What hath been discoursed upon this Argument, discovers the vanity of many mens pretensions to the Spirit. Some pretend to Infallibility,

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ty, all pretence whereto is vain, without Miracles to justifie and make good this pretence ; and yet upon this presumption of Infallibility, without any proof of it, but only that it is convenient for them to have it, which will as well prove all others to be infallible, because it is every whit as convenient for them : I say, upon this presumption and pretence, they assume to themselves to dictate to all the World, what they shall believe, and to censure and condemn all those who will not submit to their dictates, as miserably mistaken, and out of the way of Salvation ; whereas the Infallibility of the Apostles was a supernatural Gift, not evident of it self, but evidenced to the World by the Miracles which were wrought, to confirm the Truth of their Testimony and Doctrine ; and without this Evidence of Infallibility, No Man's, no Churches pretences to it ought to be regarded, but ought to be look'd upon as fanatical Enthusiasm. Besides, the prodigious uncharitableness of this Spirit, as directly contrary as can be to the first and chief *fruit of the Spirit* mention'd by the

the Apostle, which is *Love* or *Charity*.

Ser. 13.

Others pretend to be guided by the Spirit in all their actions, and to be governed in an extraordinary manner by particular impulses and impressions from the Spirit of God; which they likewise pretend they can certainly discern from the motions of their own Minds and imaginations. But as they can give no reason for this, so we have seen many times in experience, that men have been led into unlawful and wicked practices, and have done weak and unreasonable, and ridiculous things, and then have blasphemously charged them upon the Spirit of God; a presumption of a high nature, and which hath some resemblance to the sin against the Holy Ghost, and seems to be of near affinity with it. For as the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost consisted in resisting the Evidence of our Saviour's Miracles, and perversely and maliciously imputing the operations of the Spirit of God to the Power and Efficacy of the Devil;

Vol. 10. vil ; so on the other hand, to pretend the Spirit of God and his motions for the works of the Devil, and any thing that is wicked ; and to ascribe these things, which are more likely to proceed from the instigation of that evil Spirit, to the impulse of the Holy Spirit of God, is a high blasphemy of the Holy Ghost.

Others pretend, that the Spirit doth immediately dictate to them their Prayers, which many times are very confused and unbeseeming, and too plainly the issue of a heated imagination ; whereas *God is not the God of confusion, but of order.* And what is meerly the effect of an acquired habit, or natural fluency and facility of Expression and warm Affections, they confidently ascribe to the Spirit of God ; whereas the Spirit of God is more frequently and certainly in *the still voice*, than in *the high wind* and *fire*, the boisterous passions, and fiery Zeal of men. And certainly he that takes care to put up wise and decent Petitions to God, and considers carefully what to beg of him, and

and asks it in a becoming manner, with *faith* and true *ferveency* of affection. Ser. 13.
on, though in a form, hath much more reason to conclude that he Prays in and by the Spirit of God, than he that hath the greatest freedom of Extempore effusions.

And after all, there is a much better and clearer demonstration, that a Man hath the Spirit of God, than any of these pretences, and that is from the undoubted *fruits of the Spirit*, in the Graces and Virtues of a good life, which are visible and manifest in the temper and conversation of a good Man; and without these, all pretences to the Spirit of God, are but fantasies and vain delusions; such men *deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them.*

VIII. And *Lastly*, From hence it appears how happy it is for us, that we are not left in our own hands, and to our own weakness and impotency, and *to work out our own salvation*, but that we are under the continual conduct, and powerful protection

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on of such a Guardian, and that the Holy Spirit is always ready to be afforded to us, to all the purposes of Guidance and Assistance, of Comfort and Support, of Sanctification and Obedience, of Patient Continuance and Perseverance in Well-doing, *Let us therefore, as the Apostle exhorts, work out our Salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do.* We are not left to our selves to carry on this great work, for then it would certainly miscarry; but *God works in us both the will and inclination to that which is good, and gives us the power to do it:* he does not force our Wills, but encline them by the gentle suggestions and motions of his blessed Spirit; with which, if we comply, we are happy; if we resist them, and rebel against them, *we receive the grace of God in vain, and our ruine and destruction is of our selves.*

But can we then do nothing? No, not without the preventing and assisting Grace of God; but that being afforded to us, we may comply with
the

with human liberty.

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the motions of God's blessed Spirit; we may cooperate and concur with his assistance. God assists, but we do; he sanctifies and renews us by the Holy Ghost, and yet we purifie and cleanse our selves. Ser. 13.

But is not this injurious to the Grace of God, if we do any thing at all, and the Grace of God do not do all in us and for us? I answer,

1. It is a great Grace of God, to help our weakness, and to relieve our impotency, and to strengthen and enable us to do what we cannot do of our selves. We owe our Salvation to the Grace of God, to the influence and assistance of his Holy Spirit, if so be, that without it we should still remain *dead in trespasses and sins*, and should never be able to emerge and recover out of that corrupt and miserable state.

2. Grace does not destroy Nature, nor Divine assistance take away our liberty, but frees us from our bondage; and, as *David* expresseth it, *enlargeth*

D d

our

Vol. 10. *our hearts to run the ways of God's Com-
mandments; for if God do all, and we
nothing, all Exhortations and Perswa-
sions would be in vain.*

But then it seems that we may re-
ceive the grace of God in vain, and
resist the Holy Ghost; and our compli-
ing with it, or not resisting of it,
our own act; which is to make
their own Saviour, and to give
casting and determining Vote to
man liberty: I Answer,

1. The Scripture expressly says, that
men may receive the grace of God
in vain, and reject the counsel of God
against themselves; and that if we resist
against, and disobey the motions
of God's Spirit, he will depart from
us, and we forfeit his assistance.

2. All this is, *αργός λόγος*,
cavil; as will appear to any one,
this plain instance. A rebel is con-
victed, and liable to the Sentence of
Condemnation of the Law, he
for a Pardon, and obtains and accepts
it; will any Man now say, that

cause he asks and accepts it from the King, and the King does not take his Ser. 13.
 hand and open it, and violently thrust the Pardon into it, that this Man saves himself, and takes away the glory of the King's Grace and Mercy, and that he owes his life to himself, and not to the King's Bounty and Goodness? A Man would be thought very senseless, that should so ascribe this Man's deliverance from death to any act of his own, as not to think it wholly owing to the King's Grace and Favour, think the Case is the very same, concerning mens complying with that Grace which God affords them for their *repentance unto life*. I would not know of these subtle Objectors, whether *Moses*, when he says, *Deut.* 19. *I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life*; do not, in so saying plainly suppose, that men may *choose life* or *refuse it*? And if so, whether he intend to make men their own Saviour?

But this Objection is press yet a little further; That if this be so, then

Vol. 10. *Judas* had as much cause to thank God, as *Peter* had. And whoever denyed, or can deny, that a Rebel who refuseth a Pardon offered to him by his Prince, hath the same real obligation of gratitude to his Prince, with him that accepts it? The Prince offers the same favour to both, and the obligation is equal; and tho' he that accepts it do not save himself, yet he that refuseth it destroys himself. And at the Judgment of the great day, all impenitent sinners under the Gospel, shall be forced to acknowledge the Grace of God to them, in affording the opportunity of Salvation, and shall only blame and condemn themselves for neglecting that happy opportunity. But if an irresistable degree of Grace be necessary to every Man's Salvation it is plain, that impenitent sinners never had the opportunity of Salvation and consequently cannot condemn themselves for the neglect of it.

I have been the longer upon this that I might root out of the Minds of men an inveterate false perswasion concerning the manner of the operation

with human liberty.

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tion of God's Grace in the conversion of sinners. And thus much may suffice *Ser. 13.* to have spoken concerning the Operation of God's Spirit upon men, in order to their conversion, and making of them good: But after men are converted, and do sincerely *repent and believe the Gospel*, they have the Spirit of God in another manner; he *dwells and resides in believers*, as a constant and settled Principle of Holiness and Obedience, as I have already shewn.

Dd 3 SER-

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to have spoken concerning the Op-
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Obedience, as I have already shewn.

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SERMON XIV.

The Fruits of the Spirit, the same
with Moral Virtues.

EPH. V. 9.

*For the Fruit of the Spirit is in all Good-
ness, and Righteousness, and Truth.*

I Have formerly, upon occasion of
this Festival Solemnity, *discours'd ^{Preach-}
on divers sorts of Arguments relating ^{ed on}
to the Holy Spirit of God. As con- ^{Whit-}
cerning † the miraculous Powers and ^{sunday,}
Gifts of the Holy Ghost conferr'd up- ^{1690.}
on the Apostles in a visible manner, ^{† See}
when they were assembled together ^{Serm. 9.}
upon this day of Pentecost, to qualify
and enable them for the more speedy
and effectual Planting and Propagate

ing of the Christian Religion in the
 Vol. 10. World, which is the Argument more
 peculiarly proper to this day.

See Serm.
 12. and 13.

I have likewise * discours'd to you concerning the sanctifying Power and Virtue of the Holy Spirit of God, which is common to all Christians, and to all Ages of the Christian Church. As also concerning the blessed Fruit and Effect of God's Holy Spirit conferred upon Christians in Baptism, and which does continually dwell and reside in all those who do sincerely perform, and make good their Baptismal Vow, to assist and enable them to all the purposes of Holiness and Obedience, and to work and encrease in us all those Graces and Virtues which are here in the Text, said to be the Fruit of the Holy Spirit of God. *For the Fruit of the Spirit is in all Goodness, and Righteousness, and Truth.* The Connexion of which words, with the Apostle's foregoing Discourse, is briefly this. At the 17. Verse of the former Chapter, the Apostle gives a solemn charge to the Christians at *Ephesus*, who were newly converted from Heathenism to Christianity, to be careful that their

Conver-

Conversation be answerable to that Holy Religion which they now made Profession of, and that as they had quitted the Religion and Rites of Paganism, so likewise that they would abandon the Vices and evil Practices of it; that the World might see that they had made as great a change in their Minds and Manners, as in their Religion. *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who having lost the sense of good and evil, have given themselves over to all filthiness and brutish lusts.* And then at the 20th Verse he tells them, that the Christian Religion requires another sort of conversation; *But ye have not so learned Christ: If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: And be renewed in the spirit of your mind: And that ye put on the new*
man,

Ser. 14.

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The difference between
Vol. 10. man, which after God is created in right-
ousness and true holiness; or, the holiness
of truth.

And then he cautions them against
several sorts of Vices which they had
formerly lived in, and recommends
the contrary Virtues to their Practice;
and as an Argument thereto, he puts
them again in mind of the change
which they had made, at the 8th Verse
of this Chapter, *For ye were sometimes
darkness, but now are ye light in the
Lord.* The condition they were in,
whilst they were Heathens, he calls
darkness; by which Metaphor he re-
presents that dismal state of ignorance
and wickedness in which they for-
merly were; *but now are ye light in the
Lord*: being admitted into the Chri-
stian Religion by Baptism, they were
enlightened by the Spirit of God.
For so the Apostle to the Hebrews de-
scribes Baptism by *illumination*, and
being *made partakers of the Holy Ghost*,
Heb. 6. 4. *They that were once enlight-
ened, and have tasted of the Heavenly
Gift*; which he explains in the next
words, by being *made partakers of the
Holy*

a Pagan and a Christian life.

Holy Ghost, because that is conferred
in Baptism. Ser. 14.

*But now are ye light in the Lord,
walk therefore as Children of the light;
that is, do nothing unbecoming that
state, into which by the solemn Pro-
fession of Christianity in Baptism ye
are entred; or as it follows a little af-
ter the Text, Have no fellowship with
the unfruitful works of darkness, walk
as Children of the light, as becomes
those who are enlightned and sancti-
fied by the Holy Spirit of God, where-
of ye were made partakers in Bap-
tism: For the Fruit of the Spirit is
in all goodness, and righteousness, and
truth.*

For the Fruit of the Spirit. Some Co-
pies have it, *ὁ γὰρ καρπὸς τῆς φωτός*,
for the fruit of light, that is, of the
illumination of the Holy Ghost,
which Christians are made partakers
of in Baptism, *is in all goodness, and
righteousness, and truth*, which will
make no difference in the sense.

*I shall briefly explain the importance
of these three words, goodness, and
righteous-*

righteousness, and truth; and then proceed to make some Observations from the Text.

I. *Goodness.* And what that is, the Apostle takes it for granted that every body knows; he does not go about to define or explain it, but appeals to every Man's Mind and Conscience, to tell him what it is. It is not any thing that is disputed and controverted among men, which some call good and others evil, but that which Mankind is agreed in, and which is universally approv'd by the Light of Nature, by Heathens as well as Christians; it is that which is substantially good, and that which is unquestionably so. It is not a zeal for indifferent things, about the ritual and ceremonial part of Religion, the external circumstances of it, much nicety and scrupulousness about things of no moment and consideration, such as was the Pharisees *tything of mint, annise, and cummin; disputes about meats and drinks, and the observation of days, and the like; but a pursuit of the weightier things of the law, a care of the great duties of Religion, and those*

The nature of true Goodness.

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those things wherein the kingdom of God consists; the practice of the great Virtues of Conversation, which are apt to recommend us to the general Approbation of men, to gain their good will, and to take off Exasperations, and to calm and sweeten the Spirits and Tempers of men towards us. And they must likewise be things unquestionably good, and against which there is no exception, such as will justify and bear themselves out in the general Opinion of Mankind.

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I know very well that *Goodness*, in the strict notion of it, does signify a ready inclination of Mind, to benefit and help others all that we can, as we have opportunity. And this is the particular Virtue of *Alms-giving*, or as we commonly call it, *Charity*; which is so often recommended to us under the notion of *doing good*. Gal. 6. 10. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men.* And 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they*

they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.

But there is a larger notion of *Goodness* more frequently used in the New Testament, which comprehends and takes in all those *Virtues* of Conversation, which are universally and by the light of Nature owned to be such, and the Practice whereof is apt to recommend us to the love and esteem of all men; as on the contrary, the neglect of them is apt to bring Religion under a great scandal and censure: Such are Obedience to our Superiors and Governors, and a conscientious care to discharge all those Duties which the several relations wherein we stand to others, do call for from us.

Obedience to Governors is recommended to us, under the notion of *goodness* or *well-doing*. 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14, 15. *Submit your selves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that*

The nature of true Goodness.

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that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. So likewise praying for those that are in Authority, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2, 3. I exhort therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: for Kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. Ser. 14.

In like manner, a conscientious discharge of the Duties which other relations require is recommended to us under the notion of goodness, and that which is a special Grace and Ornament to Religion, 1 Tim. 5. 4. Let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents, for that is good and acceptable before God. And Tit. 2. 9, 10. the Apostle exhorts servants to be obedient to their masters; that by this instance of goodness, as well as others, they may bring credit and reputation to Religion; Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please

~ please them well in all things, not answering again: not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

More particularly, the several Virtues of Conversation are frequently instanced in, as branches of goodness; as Unity, Peaceableness, Courtesie, Compassion, and Good-will towards all Men. The Practice of these things the Apostle calls the following of that which is good, Rom. 12. 9, 10, &c. Let love be without dissimulation: Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one towards another. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompence to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves, but rather

ther give place unto wrath. Be not overcome of evil: but overcome evil with good. So likewise the Apostle, 1 Theff. 5. 15. intanceth in abstaining from Revenge, as an eminent piece of goodness. See that none render evil for evil unto any man: but ever follow that which is good, both among your selves, and to all men. And St. Peter also gives much the same Instances of goodness that St. Paul hath done, 1 Pet. 3. 8, 9, &c. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good, let him seek peace, and ensue it. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? that is, if ye practise goodness in the instances I have mentioned.

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You see then what *goodness* is, by the Instances which the Scripture gives of it; Obedience to our Superiors and Governors, and a conscientious care of the Duties of our several relations, sincere Love and Charity, Compassion, Humility, Peace and Unity, abstaining from Wrath and Revenge, and rendering good for evil; these are unquestionable Instances of *goodness*, and pass for current among all Mankind, are on all hands agreed to be good, and have an universal approbation among all Parties and Professions, how wide soever their Differences may be in other Matters.

These are the things which are in Scripture more peculiarly called *good*, because they are so in themselves and in their own nature; and not merely because they are commanded, as the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Jewish* Religion were, which are therefore called by God himself, in the Prophet, *Statutes that were not good*, Ezek. 20. 25. *Wherefore I gave them statutes that were not good*, that is, I gave

gave them Laws concerning several things, which had no intrinsical Goodness in them. But Moral Duties, because of the essential and eternal Goodness of them, are eminently called *good*; as in that known passage of the Prophet, *Mich. 6. 8. He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

The other two fruits of the Spirit which are added in the Text, *Righteousness* and *Truth*, which respect likewise our Conversation with Men, more especially in way of Commerce, are rather parts or branches of *goodness*, than really distinct from it; but they are two considerable Virtues, and therefore the Apostle thought fit to instance particularly in them, after he had mentioned *Goodness*, which is indeed the general name that comprehends all Virtues in it.

The fruit of the spirit is righteousness, which signifies Justice in our dealings and actions with others; and truth, which is Justice in our words; for

~~~~~ he that speaks as he thinks, and performs and makes good what he promiseth, is said to be just to his word. Vol. 10. And all these, *goodness, and righteousness, and truth*, and whatever particular Virtues are comprehended under them, tho' they be truly and properly *Moral Virtues*, yet are said to be *fruits of the Spirit*.

From the Words thus explain'd, I shall make these *four* Observations, which I shall speak as briefly to as I can.

*First*, That *the fruits of the Spirit* are plain and sensible effects, appearing in the Dispositions and Lives of men.

*Secondly*, That these *fruits of the Spirit*, here mentioned, are of an eternal and immutable Nature, and of perpetual and indispensable Obligation.

*Thirdly*, That *Moral Virtues* are the *graces and fruits of the Spirit*.

*Fourthly*,



*Fourthly*, That therefore they are by no means to be slighted, as low and mean attainments in Religion; but are to be looked upon and esteemed as a main and substantial part of Christianity. Ser. 14.

*First*, That *the fruits of the Spirit* are real and sensible effects, appearing in the Dispositions and Lives of men. The Apostle here speaks of what is visible in the Lives and Conversations of men; for he exhorts Christians to *walk as children of the light*; now *walking* is a Metaphor, which signifies the outward Conversation and Actions of men. *Walk as children of the light. For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth*; that is, if a man be endued with *the Spirit*, it will discover it self by these visible *fruits and effects*. What the Apostle says of *the works of the flesh*, Galat. 5. 19. *The works of the flesh are manifest*, plainly to be seen in the Lives and Conversations of men, is equally true of *the fruits of the Spirit*, that *they also are visible and manifest*; so that by

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Vol. 10. these, men may make a judgment of their Condition, whether they be true Christians, and *the Spirit of God dwell in them*, or not, viz. by the temper and disposition of our Minds, manifestly appearing in our Lives and Actions, by the practice of those real Virtues which are the proper and genuine *fruits* of the Holy Spirit of God. For Religion is not an invisible thing, consisting in meer Belief, in heighth of Speculation, and niceties of Opinion, or in abstruseness of Mystery. The Scripture does not place it in things remote from the sight and observation of men; but in real and visible Effects, such as may be plainly discerned, and even felt in the Conversation of Men; not in abstracted Notions, but in substantial Virtues, and in a sensible power and efficacy upon the Lives of men, in all the instances of Piety and Virtue, of holy and excellent Actions. This our Saviour requires of his Disciples, that the Virtue and Holiness of their lives should be so visible and conspicuous, that all Men may behold it, and give Testimony to it, and glorifie God upon that account; *Mat. 5. 16. Let your light*

*visible in the lives of men.*

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*light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in heaven.* Not that

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Men should make any ostentation of Religion, as the *Pharisees* did of their Devotion and Alms, which our Saviour censures very severely : but there is a great difference between an affected and vain-glorious shew of Piety and Virtue, and the real and substantial Effects of them in a good life, which as they cannot, so they ought not to be hid ; nay, on the contrary, men ought, as *St. James* exhorts, *James 3. 13. to shew out of a good conversation their works with meekness of wisdom*, that is, in a wise manner, not with Pride and Ostentation, but with Meekness and Humility, the great Ornament of all Christian Graces and Virtues. I proceed to the

*Second Observation*, namely, That these *fruits of the spirit*, here mentioned, *Goodness, and Righteousness, and Truth*, are of an eternal and immutable Nature, and of perpetual and indispensable Obligation. The notions of good and evil, of just and unjust, of truth and fidelity, and of

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falsehood

falsehood and perfidiousness in our Words and Actions, I say, these notions are born with us, and imprinted in our Natures, and so fixt and determin'd in the very frame of our Minds and Understandings, that as they need not to be explain'd, so they can never be chang'd and altered. The difference of Good and Evil is naturally known, and the notions of *Righteousness, and Goodness, and Truth,* are fixt antecedently to any Divine Revelation, which supposeth the nature of them to be known, and therefore doth not go about to define and explain them to us; and supposeth likewise the Obligation of them, being branches of the Law of Nature, and essential parts of that Religion which is *born with us, and written upon our hearts,* and makes us a law to our selves. And therefore the Christian Religion doth only declare these Duties more plainly, and press them more earnestly upon us, and enforce the Obligation of them by more powerful Arguments and Considerations, grounded upon clearer discoveries of the Grace and Mercy of God to Mankind, and of the Rewards and Punish-



of an immutable nature.

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Punishments of another World : but these Duties are in their Nature still the same, and the Christian Religion is so far from releasing us from the obligation of them, that it hath very much heighten'd it, and bound them the faster upon us. I pass on to to the

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*Third Observation from these words, namely, That Moral Virtues are the graces and fruits of the Spirit. For the three particulars here mentied by the Apostle are no other, but the chief Heads and Instances of Moral Duties, goodness, and righteousness, and truth. What are these but Moral Virtues? And yet it is certain, that they are also Christian Graces, because they are here expressly said to be the fruits of the Spirit.*

And they are called *Moral Virtues*, because they are such Duties as are not enjoyned by any positive Law, (which is not obligatory from the Nature and Reason of the thing Commanded, but meerly from the Command;) but are of natural and eternal obli-

Vol. 10. obligation, and such as we had been bound to the observance of them, from the immutable goodness and reason of them, tho' God had never made any external Revelation of his Will concerning them. Tho' it cannot be denied, but that by the means of external Revelation, we have a more clear and certain Knowledge of them, and more powerful Motives to the Practice of them. So that *Grace* and *Virtue* are but two names that signify the same thing. *Virtue* signifies the absolute Nature and Goodness of these things: *Grace* denotes the Cause and Principle by which these *Virtues* are wrought and produced, and are preserved and encreased in us, namely, by the free Gift of God's Holy Spirit to us; for which reason, these Graces and Virtues of *goodness, and righteousness, and truth*, which are here mentioned in the Text, are said to be *the Fruits of the Spirit*. I come now to the

*Fourth and last Observation* from the Text, namely, That since these very things which are called *Moral Virtues*, are in their Nature the very same with

*the fruits of the Spirit.*

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with *the Graces and Fruits of the Spirit*, therefore they are by no means to be slighted, as low and mean attainments in Religion, but to be looked upon and esteemed as a main and substantial part of Christianity. They are called *the Fruits of the Spirit*, that is, the natural and genuine Effect of that Divine Power and Influence upon the Hearts and Lives of men, which accompanies the Christian Religion; or the happy Effects of the Christian Religion wrought in men, by the immediate operation and assistance of the Holy Spirit of God, which is conferred upon all Christians in their Baptism, and does continually dwell and reside in them, if by wilful sins they do not grieve him, and drive him away, and provoke him to withdraw himself from them.

I do not say that these Virtues are all Religion, and all that is necessary to make a Man a compleat Christian, and good Man. For there must be Knowledge to direct us in our Duty; there must be Faith or a hearty Assent to the Revelation of the Gospel, (especially concerning the Forgiveness

Vol. 10. ness of our sins, and of our Justification and acceptance with God, for the sake of the meritorious Sufferings of our Blessed Saviour,) to be the Root and Principle of all Religious Actions; there must be Piety and Devotion towards God, and the constant Practice and Exercise of Religious Duties in publick and private, such as Prayer, Hearing and Reading the Word of God, frequent and reverent receiving of the Holy Sacrament, which are the best and most effectual means in the World to make men good, because they are appointed by God, and attended with his Blessing to that end; I say, there must be all these, because they are the Principles and Means of Religion, which are always supposed as necessary to that which is the End. Now the great End of Religion, that which Christianity mainly designs to work and perfect in us, are those Graces and Virtues which are called *the Fruits of the Spirit*; such as those mentioned in the Text, *goodness, and righteousness, and truth.*

And this will be evident to any one, that will attentively consider what the Scripture



Scripture says of them; and more especially how our Saviour and his Apostles do every where recommend them to our Consideration and Practice. *Micah 6. 8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* It is to these qualities and dispositions of *Goodness*, and *Righteousness*, and the like Virtues, that our Saviour promises blessedness. These St. Peter calls a *Divine* or *God-like nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4, 5. speaking of the Knowledge of the Gospel, *Whereby*, says he, *are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature*; and thereupon he exhorts that Christians should give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, by adding to the Faith of the Gospel, the several Graces and Virtues of a good life; these being that *Divine Nature* which the Gospel designs to make us partakers of.

To speak a little more particularly of the three Virtues here mentioned, *Goodness, Righteousness, and Truth.* These

These are every where frequently commended and enjoined in the New Testament. *Goodness*, whether we consider it as it imports Charity in general, and our love of one another, our Saviour makes it the great Badge and Mark of a Christian. *Hereby*, says he, *shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.* St. Paul calls it *the fulfilling of the law, and the end of the Commandment*, τὸ τέλος τῆς παραγγελίας, *the great end and design of the Gospel, is charity.* St. John riseth yet higher, and speaks of it as the very Nature and Essence of God himself, and that by which we are as it were united to him. *God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* Or whether we consider *goodness* under the Notion of Compassion and Beneficence, a readiness to pity and relieve and benefit others according to our ability and opportunities. This the Scripture Celebrates as a thing highly acceptable to God. *Heb. 13. 16. But to do good, and to communicate, forget not. For with such Sacrifices God is well pleased.* And St. James instanceth in it as one of the most signal Testimonies

nies of true Piety, *James* 1. 27. *Pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their Affliction.* And Chap. 3. 17. he makes it a mark and character of the Divine and Heavenly Wisdom; *The wisdom which is from above, is full of mercy and good works.* Ser. 14.

And then for *Righteousness*, of which *Truth and Fidelity* in our intercourse with men is a considerable part. *St. Paul* instanceth in it, in the first place, as a principal thing wherein *the kingdom of God doth consist*, *Rom.* 14. 17. *The kingdom of God doth not consist in meats and drinks*, that is, the power and efficacy of the Christian Religion, or the Gospel, (which is frequently in the New Testament called *The kingdom of God*.) doth not consist in zeal about indifferent things: but in the substantial Virtues of a good life, in *Righteousness and Peace*.

You see by all this, at what a rate the Scripture magnifies these Virtues, as the great things of Religion, the End of the Gospel, and that wherein our

our Christianity does mainly consist.  
 Vol. 10. The consideration whereof would make a Man stand amazed, to think how these Virtues should ever fall into so much contempt among those who call themselves Christians, and do every day read the Bible; and come to be accounted but low and pitiful things, in comparison of I know not what fancies and conceits, wherein some are pleased to place Religion. For what can the best Religion that ever was in the World (which Christianity certainly is) be better placed in, than in these and the like Virtues; all which are so excellent in their nature and use, and have so direct a tendency both to the Happiness of particular Persons singly consider'd, and of Human Society, and several of them, especially those instanced in, in the Text, *Goodness, and Righteousness, and Truth*, are the very Nature and Perfection of God himself?

And what more worthy to be the fruits of the holy Spirit of God, and the effects of a Divine Power and Influence working upon the Minds of men,



men, than such Qualities and Dispositions as render us so like to God, and do so nearly resemble the highest Excellencies and Perfections of the Divine Nature? And therefore our Saviour useth this as an Argument to perswade us to be good, and merciful, and patient; because these Qualities are so near a resemblance and imitation of the Divine Perfection, the nearest that Creatures are capable of. *Mat. 5. 48. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

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And thus I have dispatch'd the four Observations from the Text; That the fruits of the Spirit are plain and sensible Effects, appearing in the dispositions and lives of Men; That they are of an eternal and immutable nature, and of perpetual and indispensable Obligation; And tho' they be Moral Virtues, yet they are likewise the fruits of the Spirit; and are by no means to be slighted and undervalued, as low and mean Attainments in Religion.

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All that now remains, is to make some Inferences from what has been discours'd on this Text.

And if this Discourse be true, then the want of these Virtues mentioned in the Text, and the reigning of the contrary Vices in us, is a clear and undeniable Evidence, notwithstanding all our fair Professions and Pretences, that we are not true Christians. For if we do not bring forth *the fruits of the Spirit*, we have not the Spirit of Christ; and then St. Paul hath determined our case, that *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*. If these Christian Graces and Virtues mentioned in the Text, *Goodness, and Righteousness, and Truth*, do not shine forth in our Lives and Conversations, it is plain according to the Apostle's reasoning in this and other Texts, that we are not *Children of the light*, because we do not *walk as Children of the light*, as those that are enlightened by the Spirit of God; for *the fruit of the Spirit*, or *the fruit of light*, as some Copies have it, *is in all Goodness, and Righteousness, and Truth*.

*Righteousness, and Truth.* And if these  
fruits be not found in us, 'tis a plain  
Evidence that we do not walk in the  
Spirit, that we are not led and guided  
by the Spirit of God; for the fruits of  
the Spirit, as well as the works of the  
flesh, are manifest, sufficiently plain  
and visible in the Conversations of  
men; and according as we fulfil the  
lusts of the one, or bring forth the fruits  
of the other, we may certainly judge  
whether we have the Spirit of Christ  
or not, that is, whether we be true  
Christians, or do only usurp a name,  
and take a title to our selves, which  
does not of right belong to us. We  
need not to trouble and puzzle our  
selves with a great many doubtful and  
obscure Marks, to find out by them  
what our State and Condition is, and  
whether we be the Children of God  
or not; if we have a mind to know  
it, we may soon bring the matter to  
an issue, by looking into our own  
Hearts and Lives, whether the fruits  
of the Spirit be there, in all Goodness,  
and Righteousness, and Truth, and in  
all those Virtues which are elsewhere  
mentioned as fruits of the Spirit.

~ These are plain and sensible things,  
 Vol. 10. and if these Virtues be in us, they  
 cannot be hid from our selves or  
 others, but will shine forth in our  
 Lives and Conversations, in all our  
 Words and Actions. *Goodness* is soon  
 seen, it hath a native Beauty and  
 Brightness in it, which draws the  
 eyes of men towards it; and it disco-  
 vers it self by its effects, which are  
 perceived and felt in those upon  
 whom it is exercised. *Righteousness*,  
 and *Truth*, are likewise very sensible  
 to our selves and others; and so are  
 the contrary Dispositions and Practi-  
 ces. No Man does an unjust thing,  
 but his Conscience tells him he does  
 so; no Man speaks contrary to Truth,  
 or breaks his Word and Promise, but  
 he is guilty to himself of so doing.  
 And thus I might instance in all other  
 Virtues and Vices. If we will but  
 look into our selves, and observe our  
 own Actions, we may easily discern,  
 whether we be malicious and envious,  
 cruel and hard-hearted, censorious  
 and uncharitable; or good, and kind,  
 and merciful, and ready to forgive;  
 whether we make conscience of our  
 Word or not; and whether we do to  
 others,



others, as we would have them do to us. Nothing is more easie to be known than it is, which of these qualities does possess and rule our Hearts, and govern and bear sway in our Lives. And if we can know this, we know whether we have *the fruits of the Spirit* or not: *for the fruit of the Spirit is in all Goodness, and Righteousness, and Truth.* And by these *fruits of the Spirit*, or the want of them, (which are both very discernable) we may know what our State and Condition is, whether we have the Spirit of God, and be true and sincere Christians. A great many men tire themselves in an endless Enquiry, concerning the good estate of their Souls towards God; whether they be the Children of God, and whether they have the Spirit of God or not, and are trying themselves all their lives, by obscure and uncertain marks, which will never bring the matter to any clear issue, but leave them still in the dark and in doubt, concerning their own Sincerity, and the Integrity of their Hearts towards God. And how can it be otherwise, since they have been so often told by unskilful

Vol. 10.

men, that they cannot know their own Hearts, and consequently can never be assured of their own Integrity and Sincerity? This, I must confess, is but an ill sign of Sincerity, when we find it so hard a matter to discern it in our selves. Job found it clearly in himself, and was very confidently assured of it, Job 27. 5, 6. *Till I die, says he, I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go.* But if a Man cannot know his own Heart, and whether he have Integrity or not; how shall he know either when he parts with it, or when he holds it fast? The Apostle in the Text gives us a sure mark whereby we may know when we have the Spirit of God, by the sensible *fruits* and effects of it.

I will conclude all with the Apostle's Exhortation, Phil. 4. 8. *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise; think on these things.* Think of them  
and

and regard them as principal Parts of your Duty, and particular Instances Ser. 14.  
of that universal Goodness which Christianity teacheth and requires, as the proper and genuine Effects of that Grace of God *which hath appeared to all men, and brings Salvation*, that is, of the Gospel. And if the Doctrine of the Gospel do not produce these blessed Fruits and Effects in the hearts and lives of those who profess the Christian Religion; then, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* reasons, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which was at first spoken by the Lord, and afterwards confirmed by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

The first of these is the doctrine of the Trinity, which is the doctrine of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who are co-equal and co-eternal. The second is the doctrine of the Incarnation, which is the doctrine of the Son of God becoming flesh and dwelling among men. The third is the doctrine of the Atonement, which is the doctrine of the Son of God dying for the sins of the world. The fourth is the doctrine of the Resurrection, which is the doctrine of the Son of God rising from the dead. The fifth is the doctrine of the Ascension, which is the doctrine of the Son of God going up into heaven. The sixth is the doctrine of the Second Coming, which is the doctrine of the Son of God coming back to earth to judge the living and the dead. The seventh is the doctrine of the Kingdom of God, which is the doctrine of the Son of God establishing his kingdom on earth. The eighth is the doctrine of the Church, which is the doctrine of the Son of God building his church on the rock. The ninth is the doctrine of the Sacraments, which is the doctrine of the Son of God instituting the sacraments. The tenth is the doctrine of the Christian Life, which is the doctrine of the Son of God teaching his people how to live.



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# SERMON XV.

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The Necessity of Supernatural  
Grace, in order to a Christian  
Life.

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JOHN XV. 5.

— For without me ye can do  
nothing.

**I**N the beginning of this Chapter,  
our Saviour compares his Mysti-  
cal Body, that is his Church, to a  
Vine, which his Father, whom he  
compares to a Husbandman, hath  
planted. *I am the true Vine, and my  
Father is the Husbandman.* To repre-  
sent

sent to us the Union that is betwixt Christ and all true Christians, and the influence of Grace and Spiritual life, which all that are united to him do derive and receive from him, he sets it forth to us by the resemblance of a Vine and Branches. As there is a natural vital Union between the Vine and the Branches, so is there a spiritual vital Union between Christ and the true Christians; and this Union is the cause of our Fruitfulness in the works of Obedience, and a good life. There are some indeed that seem to be grafted into Christ, by an outward Profession of Christianity, who yet derive no influence from him, so as to bring forth Fruit, because they are not vitally united to him; these the Husbandman will lop off, and take away, as unprofitable and dead Branches, *ver. 2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; that is, they who only make an outward Profession of Faith in Christ, but do not bring forth the Fruits of Obedience and a good life, shall finally be separated from him: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.* And because  
all

all our Fruitfulness depends upon our Union with Christ, as the Fruitfulness of the Branches depends upon their Union with the Vine, therefore he bids us be careful, that this Union be preserved and continued, *ver. 4. Abide in me, and I in you.* We are planted into Christ by Faith, and the belief of his Doctrine; and we abide in him by a firm purpose and Resolution of Obedience. So they are said to abide and continue in Christ's Word, who obey and practice his Doctrine, *John 8. 31. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my Disciples indeed.* So St. James explains it, *Jam. 1. 25. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, that is, the Christian Doctrine, and continueth therein, How is that: he being not a forgetful bearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.* And, *1 John 3. 6. Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not.*

*Abide in me, and I in you.* Christ is said to abide in us, by the continual aids and influences of his Grace and Holy Spirit: and if we abide in him, by the resolution of Obedience; his  
Grace

Grace and Assistance will be continually derived to us, to bring this good resolution to effect, and to enable us to bring forth Fruit. *For as the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. For without me, ye can do nothing, *χωρίς μου*, out of me, being separated from me, ye can do nothing.*

There are *two* things to be explained in the words, and then I shall come to the Assertion or Proposition contained in them.

*First*, What is here meant by being *without Christ*, or *out of him*.

*Secondly*, In what Sense, and with what Limitations we are to understand that expression, *we can do nothing*.

*First*, What is here meant by being *without Christ*, or *out of him*. *Out of me ye can do nothing*; that is, unless we be united to him, and by virtue of



of that Union derive from him the supernatural aids and influences of Ser. 14.  
his Grace, *we can do nothing.* 'Tis true indeed, that without God we can do nothing; we cannot think, or speak, or do any natural action, without the common assistance and concurrence of his Providence; for *in him we live, and move, and have our being.* But this assistance is natural, and ordinary, and commonly afforded to every Man in the World: but the Grace and Assistance of Christ signifies something extraordinary and supernatural, that which Divines mean by *supernatural grace*, in opposition to the ordinary concurrence of Divine Providence to all the actions of men.

Secondly, In what Sense, and with what Limitations we are to understand that Expression, *we can do nothing. Without me ye can do nothing.* And this is necessary to be limited to such Effects as our Saviour was speaking of, viz. the proper acts of a Christian life, Obedience to the Laws and Precepts of the Gospel, which our Saviour here, in pursuance of the Allegory, calls *bearing fruit, and bringing*  
ing

Vol. 10. *ing forth much fruit.* For if it be not thus limited, but extended to all kinds of actions, Natural and Civil, it is not true that we cannot do these without supernatural assistance, and the grace of Christ. For these we may do by the common and natural assistance and concurrence of God equally afforded to men: nay, more than this, we may by this common assistance do those actions, which tend to make us spiritually good, and are the means appointed by God for that purpose. We may go to Church, we may read and hear God's Word, and upon the hearing of it may reflect upon the actions of our lives, and may be convinced of our sin and danger, and upon this conviction, may beg God's Mercy and Grace to reform and grow better. But then we cannot effect this without supernatural Grace and assistance. So that this assertion here in the Text, is to be limited to the purposes of Regeneration, and Sanctification, and perseverance in Holiness; that a Man cannot make himself good, he cannot convert and change himself, nor by his own strength continue and hold out in a good course;

we can do nothing of this, without the Grace and assistance of Christ. Ser. 15.

So that the plain design of this Proposition here in the Text, is to assert the necessity of supernatural Grace, to make men good, and to make them persevere in a course of Holiness and Obedience. In speaking to this Argument, I shall,

*First*, Shew what it is we mean by the supernatural Grace and assistance of Christ.

*Secondly*, That to this the Scripture doth constantly attribute our Regeneration, and Sanctification, and Perseverance in Holiness.

*Thirdly*, That there is great reason to assert the Necessity of God's supernatural Grace and Assistance to these purposes.

*Fourthly*, That this supernatural Grace and assistance does not exclude, but suppose the concurrence of our own endeavours.

*Fifthly*,

*Vol. 10.* *Fifthly,* That this Grace and Assistance is derived to us from our Union with Christ.

*First,* What we mean by the supernatural Grace and Assistance of Christ. Whatever natural power we have to do any thing, is from God, and an effect of his Goodness; but God considering the lapsed and decayed condition of Mankind, sent his Son into the World, to recover us out of that sinful and miserable condition into which we were fallen, to reveal eternal life to us, and the way to it, and to purchase happiness for us, and to offer it to us upon certain terms and conditions to be performed by us. But we being weak and without strength, slaves to sin, and under the power of evil habits, and unable to free our selves from this bondage by any natural Power left in us, our Blessed Saviour, in great pity and tenderness to Mankind, hath in his Gospel offer'd, and is ready to afford to us an extraordinary assistance of his Grace and Holy Spirit, to supply the defects of our natural Power and strength.



Strength. And this supernatural Grace of Christ is that alone, which can enable us to perform what he requires of us. And this, according to the several uses and occasions of it, is by Divines called by several names. As it puts good motions into us, and excites and stirs us up to that which is good, 'tis called *preventing* grace; because it prevents any motion or desire on our parts: as it assists and strengthens us in the doing of any thing that is good, it is called *assisting* Grace: as it keeps us constant in a good course, it is called *persevering* Grace: and may have several other denominations, in several other respects; for it is suited to all our occasions and necessities.

Secondly, To this Grace and Assistance of God, the Scripture doth constantly attribute our Regeneration, and Sanctification, and Perseverance in holiness. We are said to be *born again* by the Spirit, to be *sanctified* by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, to be led by the Spirit of God, and through the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the flesh, to do all things through Christ strengthening of us, and to be kept by the power of God through

 *faith unto salvation.* All which, and  
 Vol. 10. many more Texts that I might instance  
 in, do plainly expresse to us the super-  
 natural Assistance of Christ, whereby  
 we become good, and are enabled to  
 do any thing that is good, and preserv-  
 ed and continued in a good course.  
 As the Scripture doth every where at-  
 tribute sin to our own corrupt Hearts,  
 and to the Temptation and Instigation  
 of the Devil; so does it constantly as-  
 scribe all the good that we do, to the  
 Grace of Christ, or, which is all one,  
 to the blessed Motions and Assistances  
 of God's Holy Spirit. For *the Spirit of*  
*God is called the Spirit of Christ, yea*  
*Christ, Rom. 8. 9, 10. But ye are not*  
*in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be*  
*that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now*  
*if any man have not the Spirit of Christ,*  
*he is none of his. And if Christ be in*  
*you, the body is dead because of sin. By*  
*which it is evident, that the Spirit of*  
*God, and the Spirit of Christ, and Christ,*  
*do in this Text signifie one and the*  
*same thing.*

*Thirdly, There is great reason to*  
*assert the necessity of this Grace and*  
*Assistance to these purposes; whe-*  
*ther we consider the Corruption and*

Im-

Impotency of Human Nature, the strange Power of evil Habits and Customs, the Fickleness and Inconstancy of Human Resolution, or the Malice and Activity of the Devil to seduce and tempt us to sin.

I. If we consider the Corruption and Impotency of Human Nature. This the Light of Nature cannot but acknowledge. The Philosophers and wise Men among the Heathen, were sensible of a great depravation in our Souls, and degeneracy from the Divine Life; and therefore they prescribed several ways and methods for the purifying of our Souls, and the raising of them to that Purity and Perfection, to which they supposed they were designed: but they were wholly ignorant from whence this Depravation came; and therefore many of them supposed a Pre-existence of Souls, that is, that our Souls, which now inhabit these Bodies, had lived in a former State, and for some faults they had committed in that State, were by the Justice of God sentenced to be imprisoned in these Bodies, as a Punishment for their former sins. They could not imagin that our Souls

came impure out of God's hands;  
 Vol. 10. and to avoid that inconvenience, they  
 imagined a former State wherein they  
 had sinned. And this was the best  
 account they could give of the general  
 depravation of Mankind.

But the Scripture hath given us a  
 more certain account of this; that  
*by one man sin enter'd into the world,  
 and death by sin.* This is the true  
 source and original of the universal  
 degeneracy of Mankind, and of the  
 weakness and impotency of Human  
 Nature. The fall of our first Pa-  
 rents hath derived Corruption and  
 Weakness upon the whole Race and  
 Posterity of *Adam*; for *whatsoever is  
 born of the flesh, is flesh.*

So that considering our natural Im-  
 potency, there is great need of a su-  
 pernatural and extraordinary Power  
 and Assistance, to recover us from  
 this Degeneracy, and *to renew us after  
 the image of him who created us, in  
 righteousness and true holiness.* And  
 therefore when the Scripture speaks  
 of the Redemption of Christ, it re-  
 presents our Condition, not only as  
 miserable, but helpless; *Rom. 5. 6.*  
*For when we were yet without strength,*  
 in



*from the impotency of nature.*

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*in due time Christ died for the ungod-*  
ly. When Mankind was under an *Ser. 15.*

utter Impotency of recovering it self out of that state of Sin and Misery into which it was plunged, *in the fulness of time*, that is, when God thought it most convenient, *he sent his Son into the world, to die for sinners*; and by that Spirit which raised him from the dead, to enable us to mortifie our lusts, and to rise to newness of life.

2. The necessity of this Grace and Assistance will farther appear, if we consider the strange Power of evil habits and Customs. The other is a natural, and this a contracted Impotency, whereby men make themselves much weaker than they were by Nature. The habits of sin being added to our natural Impotency, are like so many Diseases superinduced upon a Constitution naturally weak, which do all help to increase the man's Infirmary. Evil habits in Scripture are compared to Bonds and Fetters, which do as effectually hinder a man from motion, and putting forth himself to action, as if he were quite lame, hand and foot. Habit and Custom is a kind of second Nature; and so far as any

G g 3  thing

thing is natural, so far it is necessary, and we cannot do otherwise. By passing from one degree of sin to another Men become fixt and harden'd in their Wickedness, and do insensibly bring themselves into that state, out of which they are utterly unable to recover themselves. When men have been long accustomed to Evil, and are once grown old in Vice, it is as hard to reform and rectifie them, as to recover a Body bowed down with age, to its first straightness. When men have continued long in a sinful course, they are almost under a fatal necessity of being wicked, and under all imaginable disadvantages of contributing any thing to their own recovery. The Scripture represents the Condition of such Persons to us, by such things as are naturally impossible. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* Now this Consideration added to the former, to the Impotency of Nature, the strength of evil Habits, is still a farther Evidence of the necessity of supernatural Grace and Assistance for our recovery. For the greater our Impotency is, so much more  
need

need is there of an extraordinary Power and Assistance, to enable us to our Ser. 15.  
Duty.

3. This will yet farther appear, if we consider the inconstancy and fickleness of human Resolution. Suppose that upon hearing the terrible Threatnings of God's Word against sin, or upon the natural checks and convictions of Conscience for having done wickedly, a sinner should of himself (as there is reason enough for it) entertain a Purpose and Resolution of breaking off his sinful course; yet how unable would this Resolution be to withstand the powerful assaults of Temptation, and the violent returns of his own Inclinations to his former-Lusts? This almost every man finds by his own frequent and sad Experience, how inconstant his Mind is to his own Purposes, and how unfaithful and treacherous to his most solemn and severe Resolutions; how false we are to our selves, and to the Vows and Promises we have made to God, and our own Souls, when the occasions and temptations of sin present themselves to us. So that our need of God's Grace is in no case more plain

and evident, than to keep us stedfast  
 Vol. 10. to our resolution of forsaking our sins,  
 and amending our lives; and without  
 this, we find how uncertain and inef-  
 fectual all our good Purposes are,  
*like the morning cloud, and as the early  
 dew which passeth away.* So that we  
 must say with the Prophet Jeremy, Ch.  
 10. 23. *O Lord, I know that the way of  
 man is not in himself; it is not in man  
 that walketh, to direct his steps.*

4. Besides all these Disadvantages  
 from our selves, from the Impotency  
 of our natures, and the Strength of  
 our Lusts, and the Inconstancy of our  
 Resolutions, we have likewise a pow-  
 erful Enemy without, the Devil, who  
 is very malicious and active to promote  
 our ruin, by keeping us in this Slave-  
 ry. He is the great Enemy of our Souls,  
 and his Malice will not suffer him to  
 neglect any opportunity of doing us  
 mischief. He observes and watcheth  
 our Tempers and Dispositions, and  
 accordingly plants his Temptations  
 and plays them upon us, where we are  
 weakest, and they may do the greatest  
 Execution. So that we are not only  
 weak within; but strongly assaulted  
 without; *We wrestle not only with flesh  
 and*



and blood ; but with principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickednesses. All Ser. 15. the Powers of darkness are combined against us, to work our Destruction ; and therefore we have need of an extraordinary strength and assistance to enable us to contend with such powerful Adversaries, upon so many disadvantages. And our Comfort is, that God offers his Grace to us, and *that is sufficient for us. Greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world.* The Spirit that dwells in good men, and is ready to assist them to all good Purposes, is stronger than that evil Spirit which is in the world, and goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Fourthly, This supernatural Grace and Assistance does not exclude, but suppose the concurrence of our own Endeavours. The Grace of God does not do all, without any concurrence on our part. It strengthens and assists us ; but does not produce the whole effect, without any activity and endeavor of ours. When our Saviour says, *Without me ye can do nothing*, he does imply, that by the assistance of his Grace, we may perform all the Duties of the Christian Life, we may bear fruit, and bring forth

*forth much fruit.* And to keep to the  
 Vol. 10. Metaphor in the Text, the Branches of  
 a Vine are not meerly passive, but contribute their part to the production of Fruit, tho' they derive continual supplies of Sap and Virtue from the Vine. When the Apostle says, *I can do all things through Christ strengthening of me,* he does not think it a disparagement to the Grace of Christ, to say *he could do all things* by the assistance of it. He acknowledgeth his own Impotency and Weakness, and glories in the strength and assistance of Christ. But an acknowledgment of Impotency does not exclude Endeavour; for Impotency does not signifie an utter want of Power, but the weakness and insufficiency of it, that it is disproportioned to the Work and Duty requir'd. So that tho' *we are not sufficient of our selves* for any thing that is good; yet being assisted by God, we may cooperate with him to the killing of sin, to *the cleansing of our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,* and to *the perfecting of holiness in the fear of God.* As the Apostles were *workers together with God,* in the salvation of others, 2 Cor. 6. 11. *We then, as workers together with God, beseech you, that ye receive not the*  
 grace

grace of God in vain; I say, as they were *workers together with God* in the Salvation of others, so may we be said to be, in *working out our own Salvation*; nay, we are commanded to be so, *Phil. 2. 12, 13. Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do.* So that God's preventing and assisting grace, his *working in us both to will and to do*, is so far from excluding our endeavours, that it is used by the Apostle as a strong Reason and Argument to the contrary, *Work out your own Salvation: for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.* And if this were not so, all the exhortations of Scripture were to no purpose, *our preaching were vain*, and your hearing vain: for nothing can be vainer, than to persuade men to do their Duty, if this be true, that God does all, and we do nothing.

*Fifthly, and lastly,* This Grace and Assistance is derived to us from our Union with Christ. So soon as we believe in him, and heartily embrace his Doctrine, we are united to him; and if we continue in this Faith, *we abide in him, and he in us*; and by virtue of this Union, the influences of his Grace, the aids and assistances of his Spirit are derived

Vol. 10. derived to us, to all the purposes of Holiness and Obedience, to enable us *to do the will of God*, and *patiently to continue in well-doing*, and to *preserve us to his heavenly Kingdom*.

There is no other Mystery in this Union, than that which I have plainly told you, That it is effected by our becoming the Disciples of Christ, and sincerely embracing his Doctrine; that it is continued by our bringing forth the Fruits of Holiness and Obedience. By this we become *Branches of that true Vine*; and being so, derive sap and virtue from him, the vital influences of his Grace and Holy Spirit, to assist us in our Duty, and to make us to be *fruitful in every good work*, and *to abound in all the fruits of righteousness*, which are by *Jesus Christ to the praise and the glory of God*.

But when I say this Grace and Assistance is derived to us from our Union, I do not intend to exclude the necessity of God's Grace and Holy Spirit to the conversion of a sinner, and his first planting into Christ: but when we say that Christians derive the influences of Grace and Assistance from their Union with Christ, this supposeth them to be Christians already,



dy, and planted into Christ, and that  
this likewise is the work of God's Grace. Ser. 15.

For if we cannot bring forth Fruit without the aid and assistance of his Grace, much less without *that* could we be planted into him, and united with him.

I shall conclude my Discourse upon this Subject, with *three* or *four* Inferences from what hath been delivered:

I. If the Grace of God be so necessary to all the ends of Holiness and Obedience, and to our Perseverance in a good course, then there is great reason why we should continually depend upon God, and every day earnestly pray to him for the aids and assistances of his Grace, and the influences of his Holy Spirit, to guide, and direct, and strengthen us in all goodness, and *to keep us by his mighty power through faith unto Salvation*. For tho' God have promised his assistance to us, and is always ready to afford it; yet we are to remember, that it is a free dispensation of his Grace and Goodness, *He works in us both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure*. And the promise of this Grace is not so absolute, but that he expects we should earnestly sue and beg to him for it. He hath not promised *his holy Spirit*, but

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Vol. 10. *to them that seek him, and that with great earnestness and importunity; we must ask, and seek, and knock. Even where he promiseth to give us a new heart and a new Spirit; yet he says, that for all these things he will be sought to by the house of Israel. And tho' sometimes he be found of them that seek him not, and do frequently prevent us with his Grace, and the motions of his blessed Spirit; yet we have no reason to expect it without our seeking of it.*

II. We should thankfully acknowledge and ascribe all the good that is in us, and all that we do, to the Grace and Assistance of God, exciting and strengthening us to every good work, without which *we can do nothing*; and say, with David, *Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord; but to thy name be the praise.* And with St. Paul, *Yet not I; but the grace of God which was with me.* As the Children of Israel were brought out of Egypt, and conducted to the possession of the good Land, (which is a Type of Heaven) by the Presence and Power of God going along with them, *not by their own Sword and Bow; but by a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm*: so if ever we be rescued from the bondage of sin, and quickned to newness of life, if ever we be saved, and come to Hea-

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*pray'd for, and acknowledged.*

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ven, we must be assisted, and conducted, *and kept by the mighty power of God: Ser. 15.*  
for by grace we are saved, and that not of  
our selves, for it is the gift of God.

III. Let us take heed that we *resist not*  
*the spirit of God, and receive not this*  
*grace of God in vain.* And this we do,  
whenever we resist the motions of God's  
blessed Spirit, and do not make use of  
that grace and assistance which God of-  
fers to us, by being *Workers together with*  
*God,* and cooperating with his grace by  
our own sincere endeavours. God's Spi-  
rit doth frequently put good motions  
into us, and is ready to further them,  
if we comply with them, and to enable  
us to bring them to effect: but men may,  
and many times do, *resist the holy Ghost,*  
and *quench* the motions of that blessed  
Spirit of Grace; and then God justly  
leaves us, and withdraws his assistance,  
and takes away his Holy Spirit from us.  
But if we comply with them; his grace  
and help is ready to carry us still far-  
ther, and to assist us more and more, that  
we may go from strength to strength, till  
we come to appear before him in Sion.

IV. The consideration of our own  
impotency, is no excuse to our sloth  
and negligence, if so be the grace of  
God be ready to assist us. For if *that*  
be

Vol. 10. be offer'd to us, and always at hand to help us, where men have not provoked God to withdraw it; then it is our own fault, if we do not do our Duty, and if we fall short of eternal happiness. For we are really able to do all that which God's Grace and Assistance is ready to enable us to do. *St. Paul reckons upon the strength of Christ as in some sense his Power. I am able to do all things through Christ strengthening me.*

V. and lastly, The consideration of our own impotency is no just ground of discouragement to our endeavours, considering the promise of Divine Grace and Assistance. Now that God is enter'd into a new Covenant of Grace with us, and offers us eternal life upon the conditions of Faith and Repentance and sincere Obedience, the greater our weakness is, the more reason we have to expect his Grace and Assistance; because we know that he deals sincerely with us, and intends to bring us to that Happiness which he offers to us; and therefore we are assured that he does not command us impossibilities, and seeing we are weak and insufficient of our selves to do what he requires of us, that he is ready to afford us his Grace to enable us to do it.

*F I N I S.*



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